LIBRARY
STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE
JOHNSON CITY, TENNESSEE

The New
REPUBLIC
A Journal of Opinion

VOL. LXXXXII NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1937 NUMBER 1189

Contents

The Week 141

Editorials

Scuttle or Bluster 144
The Mediterranean Crisis 145
Planning World Trade 145

General Articles

Roosevelt's Far Eastern Policy ... Jonathan Mitchell 147
Why Not the Grand Jury? ..... J. C. Furnas 148
The Learned Economists ..... Chester T. Crowell 150
To Madrid: III ..... Malcolm Cowley 152
Dialectical Round (verse) ..... Rolfe Humphries 155
Washington Notes ..... T. R. B. 155
Other People's Money ..... John T. Flynn 157
Vista ..... Stark Young 157
From the Original French ..... Otis Ferguson 159
The Bandwagon 160

Correspondence 161

Books in Review

The Constitution in Cotton Wool .. Charles A. Beard 162
Gibbon as a Work of Art ... Morton Dauwen Zabel 164
Jowett's Plato ..... Jesse V. Mauzey 164
Angles on Spain ..... Rolfe Humphries 165
Chinese Puzzle ..... B. E. Bettinger 166
Freud Self-Revised ..... Grace Adams 166
The Ways of Error ..... Harold Ward 166
Sour Mash ..... Christopher Lazare 167
Types of Ambiguity ..... Robert Fitzgerald 167
Books in Brief 167

The Week

THE Far Eastern situation got no better and the European one decidedly worse, during the week ending September 7. Russia sent a sharp note to Italy declaring that there is indisputable proof that Italian submarines have sunk two Russian ships and demanding reparation. Although the whole world believes that the repeated attacks on neutral shipping in the Mediterranean have come from Italy, Mussolini denied the Russian charges. The exchange of notes came on the same day when Britain and France jointly invited ten powers to participate in a conference at Nyon, Switzerland, to discuss the attacks on vessels bound for Spain. A successful blockade would gravely hamper the Spanish government, which particularly needs oil and foodstuffs from abroad. . . . In the Far East, Chinese military forces around Shanghai proved unexpectedly strong and halted a major Japanese advance. It was learned that China is planning to appeal at once to the League, probably under Section 17 of the Covenant. The preliminary Japanese reply to Great Britain over the machine-gunning of the British Ambassador to China has angered London by a refusal to accept responsibility. President Roosevelt, still declining to invoke the Neutrality Act, warned Americans in China that they remain at their own risk. . . . Importance was attached by diplomats to Mussolini's visit to Hitler, at the end of this month. . . . The Vatican reëmphasized its support of the Spanish Rebels by endorsing a long declaration favorable to Franco, issued by a group of Spanish Catholic officials.

THE outburst of Labor Day oratory served to underline to some extent the present coolness between President Roosevelt and John L. Lewis. Mr. Lewis, shortly before Labor Day, made an address that virtually served notice upon the President that the workers intend to move forward, with or without his assistance. Mr. Roosevelt, in a Labor Day message prepared before the Lewis address had been made, repeated in substance his famous "plague o' both your houses" observation. William Green descended to sheer mud-slinging in an attack upon the CIO, declaring that it is communist-aided and, in almost the same breath, that it is leading to a fascist dictatorship. . . . Governor Philip La Follette of Wisconsin, in a speech at Omaha, predicted that by 1940 a realignment of parties will have taken place so that we shall see a real struggle between conservatives and progressives. . . . A decision of the National Labor Relations Board in the case of the National Electric Products Corporation, of Ambridge, Pennsylvania, against an A.F. of L. union and in favor of a CIO group, was seized by enemies of the present national labor policy as a basis for denunciation of the Board. . . . The Department of Agriculture prepared to distribute $130,000,000 to cotton growers. Loans of nine cents a pound will be made to planters promising to join the control program, and additional subsidies on the best cotton will maintain a total price of twelve cents. In view of limited funds, only 65 percent of the crop is thus covered at present. . . . The President signed the new sugar law while denouncing it in the strongest terms; he hopes for modification in 1940.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN ALL the discussion about the application of neutrality in the Chinese-Japanese war no one seems to have noted that the United States has never in recent years behaved as a neutral and friendly nation toward China. In fact, China has been hamstrung by encroachments upon her sovereignty in which the United States has participated. Extra-territorial concessions have been forced from China which Japan uses as bases for attack. After the Boxer insurrection, the United States joined the Powers in placing limitations upon China's right to defend her northern cities; the alleged breaking of such stipulations is urged by Japan as a pretext for the invasion of North China. Some years ago China asked the Powers for recognition of her right to make her own scale of duties on imports, and thus set her financial house in order. Many readers will remember the unsympathetic report of the United States Committee headed by Silas Strawn. A little later the Chinese asked permission to close rivers leading to the interior against war vessels, to prevent the Japanese navy from penetrating to the heart of the country. Again the United States refused to give up the right of sending our gunboats to bombard Chinese villages in the interior. It may be said that Japan is carrying the ball behind interference provided by the Powers. One practical application of neutrality on our part would seem to be the removal as soon as possible of restrictions which tend to prevent China from defending herself.

WHEN William Green arises to accuse the CIO of splitting the labor movement and drags out the bogey of "communism," as he did on Labor Day, he is himself doing a fundamental injury to the cause of labor. Every friend of the workers hopes eventually to see a reunited labor movement in America. The CIO entered upon its campaign because the great majority of industrial workers were completely neglected by the entrenched craft unions of the A.F. of L. In addition to its own sweeping and direct gains, one great benefit of the CIO work has been the indirect stimulation of countless A.F. of L. bodies into—for them—unwonted activity. Meanwhile such silly outbursts as Green's Labor Day speech serve to discredit not merely CIO labor but all labor in the eyes of the public, and to delay still further the achievement of unity among American workers. Surely there must be some wiser heads in the A.F. of L. who can dissuade Green from doing further harm to his own cause.

CLASHING viewpoints about the A.F. of L., the CIO and the National Labor Relations Board are brought into focus by the case of the National Electric Products Corporation at Ambridge, Pennsylvania. Last May the company signed a contract with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, an A.F. of L. union. The rival CIO union, the United Radio and Electrical Workers, challenged the contract but a federal district court upheld it. The CIO body then appealed to the NLRB, which ordered a hearing on the case. On the basis of evidence produced at the hearing the NLRB now charges the company with violation of the Wagner Act by encouraging employees to join the A.F. of L. union and recognizing that union "at a time when the company knew that the Brotherhood did not represent the free choice of a majority of its employees." Accordingly, the Labor Board has ordered an election to enable the workers to register their free and uninfluenced choice of a collective-bargaining agency. Loud protests and charges of "favoritism" toward the CIO have been hurled at the Board by the company, the A.F. of L. and many conservative newspapers. Nevertheless, a federal circuit judge, to whom an appeal was taken by the company, has refused to interfere. The conduct of the NLRB in this case seems to us in accordance with the law. The current commotion demonstrates once again that most of the critics are using the Labor Board as a target to conceal their real animus against the Wagner Act itself.

PRESIDENT Roosevelt last week signed the sugar bill extending the life of the Jones-Costigan Act of 1934. At the same time he made an official statement attacking the "refinery monopoly" behind it that justifies most of the harsh words that have already been spoken against it. The feature of the bill that receives the most criticism is the restrictions placed upon refined sugar imported from Cuba, Puerto Rico and Hawaii—restrictions that cost the consumer several hundred million dollars each year in excessive sugar prices. President Roosevelt tried to justify his signing of the bill by revealing a "gentlemen's agreement" that is supposed to terminate the life of the sugar trust in 1940, and has reputedly already broken up the alliance between the cane and beet growers in the United States and the refining monopoly on the Eastern seaboard. The President believes that this combination of growers and refiners is the basic evil involved. He makes no mention of the more fundamental problem: whether it is sound economic policy on the whole to maintain our expensive sugar industry within the United States at all. But even leaving this question aside, the President has demonstrated, for one who knows intimately the power of the unscrupulous sugar lobby and the lengths to which the sugar trust has gone to protect its interests, a rather naïve faith in its promise of self-destruction.

SPANISH prelates have summed up their views on the conflict now devastating their country in a pastoral letter that was published to the world on September 2. The letter gives every evidence of having the approval of the Pope and may fairly be taken to represent the official views of the Catholic Church. The violence of rebellion was necessary, say the prelates, to "protect" the country from communism and anarchism and to put an end to attacks on churches and clergy. The issue of corruption and oppression in the Church that aroused the bitter

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

resentment of the people is passed over with a casual denial of such charges. The letter belies the facts in saying "the Church did not possess more than a few and insignificant portions of land, presbyteries and schools," and is evasive in denying any connection between the Church and the ruling classes of Spain. Great point is made of atrocities allegedly committed against churches and clergy, but fascist brutalities are condoned with smug complacence: "Every war has its excesses; the Nationalist movement doubtless may have had them also. Nobody defends himself with full serenity from the mad attack of a pitiless enemy." No doubt the 2,000 civilians slaughtered in a bull ring in Badajoz now rest easier with those words for a requiem.

W. R. HEARST has taken another beating, and a bad one. He has withdrawn the two applications he had pending before the Securities and Exchange Commission for the right to float new public issues totaling $35,500,000. His application was filed early last March, and ever since then it had been under attack. The chief criticism made was that Hearst's financial structure was so complicated and so meaningless that the investing public could not possibly know what was actually going on in any particular organization. The official reason given for withdrawing the application of course has nothing to do with the sharp public criticism; oh, dear, no. It is explained that since last March the investment market has grown more unfavorable, and that in the meantime the Hearst organizations involved have been reducing their existing debt. This is the latest in a series of melancholy events for the Sage of San Simeon. Only the other day he was obliged to consolidate the Universal and International news services, incidentally throwing another lot of good newspaper men into the ranks of the unemployed. Shortly before this, he had been forced to curtail his activities in several upstate New York communities, and to suspend his darling paper, The New York American. He found it necessary to take his name off his newsreel, now called by the milk-and-water title, News of the Day. Mr. Hearst's formula, with each stroke of adversity, is to go out and hire another Roosevelt. But there is a law of diminishing returns here; even the Roosevelts don't last forever.

IN Newark, N. J., a week ago, a small boy died and the autopsy revealed that he had been beaten to death. Police have arrested a woman caretaker who lived in the same house with the boy and has admitted beating him. The interesting point in the story is that when the neighbors were interrogated, a number of them said they had heard the child's screams as he was being beaten, at many times over a period of weeks. It is often charged that in big cities, social organization has a tendency to break down, and that people no longer do the automatic, spontaneous acts of neighborliness that may be expected in a small town. We remember, for example, a well dressed, white-haired old gentleman who slipped on an icy street in New York City and fell, breaking his leg; although scores of people passed him, it was half an hour before he could persuade anyone to stop and give him assistance; the theory of the majority seemed to be that he was drunk. True, we know many instances that tend to support the contrary view, that big-city dwellers are just like people anywhere else. Yet we cannot imagine that there are many small towns in this country where a child could be beaten until he died and the neighbors, listening to his cries, would do nothing.

JUST for the record, let us here set down the fact that Great Britain is carrying on a war against the Fakir of Ipi in Waziristan, on the northwestern frontier of India. It is a war of suppression, started in retaliation for raids into British protected areas and the killing of British civil and military officers. Some of the more humane students of Great Britain's imperial methods suggest that what is needed is a revision of Indian frontier policy, but thus far the only step taken by His Majesty's representatives has been to increase the use of force. The London Daily Herald estimates that the campaign already has cost upward of $5,000,000 and is costing $40,000 each day it continues. Some 30 British and 141 Indian soldiers have been killed and more than 500 have been wounded, while the tribesmen have lost 750 killed, 700 wounded and 10 villages bombed. All in all, it adds up into quite a little war, even though the rest of the world is scarcely aware of its existence. Perhaps what we need is a kind of international bulletin board, with every country bound by convention to post a notice of any wars that may be going on in its front or back yard.

IT IS impressive to come upon a description of proletarian strength in Japan written by a Japanese writer in a Japanese magazine. The article, "Mass Stirrings in Japan," by Mitsu Kohno, appeared in Contemporary Japan, a political and economic quarterly published in Tokyo, and is reprinted in The Living Age. Kohno cites the simultaneous growth of the Japan Labor Union Council and its political ally, the Social Mass Party. In the latest election this party increased its representation in the Diet from eighteen to thirty-seven deputies and now ranks as the third largest party in the Empire. It frankly announces an ultimate goal of "opposition to capitalism and construction of socialism" and for more immediate concerns it advocates state management of principal industries; the establishment of a national pension system; tax reform to relieve the financial burden on the masses; a law to define the legal rights of labor unions and a tenant-farmer law. A highly significant development is that many small industrialists and business and professional men are supporting the Social Mass Party, indicating that the pressure of Japan's top-heavy capitalism is so serious as to drive them into alliance with the proletarian elements. Kohno says that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fascist influences are in the ascendant and probably will take even more direct control of the country than now, but even so the proletarian organizations continue to make deep and rapid growth that will eventually assert itself.

OUR Dream Town, we are mildly surprised to discover, is Little Rock, Arkansas. This city has many attractions, but the thing that endears it to our heart is the Booing Club. A group of its stalwart citizenry have formed this organization, which goes to the movies in a body. It sits peaceably through the entertainment features of the program, but when advertising begins to appear on the screen, it boos. It boos singly and en masse, loudly and long. Already, so we are informed, the Booers' Club has scared the exhibitors out of their wits, and the movement is spreading to other communities; it's practically a Trend. We realize now that what we have missed all our life is membership in a Booers' Club. What we want is a club that will go wherever we go and boo what we want to boo but have been afraid to. We shall turn it loose on people who crowd into public conveyances without giving you a chance to get out; drunks in bars who imitate Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy; young couples on bus tops who tickle, slap and squeal at each other; all movie versions of romantic operetta; business callers who say "I know you are busy and I'll only take a minute," and then go on for hours and hours; female automobile drivers who nearly kill you, and after you have leaped to safety, blow their horns in rebuke. Our own list is practically endless, but the polls are still open. Send along your nominations, and we'll see what we can do.

Scuttle or Bluster

The Hon. Cordell Hull,
Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

DEAR Mr. Secretary: Two recent events have indicated that the administration in Washington is sensitive to the criticism made in so many quarters that the neutrality law should be put into effect at once in the Far East. One of these was the President's warning that Americans who insist on remaining in China do so at their own risk. The other was the thinly veiled defense of the present policy made available to some Washington correspondents over the week-end.

The President's warning is good so far as it goes, but obviously, it falls far short of being effective in its supposed purpose of reducing to a minimum the danger that we shall become embroiled in the Far Eastern war. Incidents in which American private citizens are injured or killed are only one of several possible incitements toward war, and some of the others are far more important. There are substantial armed forces of the United States in China now and more are on the way. If any number of them were killed, the push toward war would be strong. There is also the danger that Japan may halt American vessels carrying war materials to China—as she is, indeed, almost certain to do. There is the still more formidable danger that trade in war materials with both belligerents, already large, may grow until we repeat the developments of 1916.

You propose, Mr. Secretary, according to reliable reports, to use American influence to checkmate aggressors, but without "moving one inch toward war." All recent history confirms the dictates of common sense in telling us that the ambition is an impossible one. Surely, no one is any longer sufficiently naïve to suppose that there is any effectiveness to the mere statement of moral principles, as exemplified, for instance, in the Kellogg-Briand pact, which has proved so tragically futile. What else do you propose? If you are considering economic sanctions, it is clear today that these are ineffective unless you intend to back them with force. And if you plan to do that, your policy is not one of keeping out of war but one involving the very danger of going in.

Statements made in the past few days on your behalf have indicated that military purchases in the United States for Japan and China have thus far been small and that application of the Neutrality Act, by encouraging a formal declaration of war by Japan, would also encourage a complete blockade of the Chinese coast, including neutral shipping. Whether the present munitions trade is to be called large or small is a matter of opinion; but there can be no division of opinion on the point that, left to itself, it will certainly grow and will cast its shadow over our entire Far Eastern policy. As for a Japanese blockade that will include neutral shipping, no one can doubt that this is highly probable, whether or not Japan makes a formal declaration of war.

We have only one real choice in the Orient, Mr. Secretary, and sooner or later the administration of which you are a part will be forced to recognize that fact. The attempt to enforce "collective security" means, as the whole experience of the League of Nations has taught us, that the powers endorsing collective security must be prepared to fight for it. If they will firmly announce their intention of doing so, there is a chance—a desperately faint chance, as things stand at present—that they may be successful. If they are not prepared to fight, then the only real alternative is to let the aggressors go ahead, in the hope (and it is a well founded hope) that their course will prove ruinous to them in the end.

The fatal policy, from the standpoint of peace, Mr. Secretary, is in our judgment the one you are now pursuing, of striking a moral attitude against aggression and at the same time insisting that we do not intend to go to war to halt it. Naturally, no aggressor is going to take seriously the protests against his course that are made under these circumstances. He will continue in his actions regardless of the damage to our national interests, and we shall then confront a repetition of what we saw

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

during the first two and a half years of the Great War. If your neighbor's house is on fire, it is good sense to pour water on your own roof. It may even be good sense to help him put out his fire before it spreads to your house. But it is not good sense to ignore safety precautions for your own dwelling place and do nothing else except to denounce your neighbor for having got into his predicament.

Persons close to you, Mr. Secretary, have sought to create public contempt for the advocates of putting the neutrality law into effect by describing this as a policy of "scuttle." This is an attempt to descend to the plane of pure emotion that should have no place in a debate so serious in its consequences as the present one. If, however, we are to use these weapons, it is just as fair to describe the present administration course as one of "bluster." Certainly, that word can fairly be applied to the declaration that we are opposed to aggression, although we don't intend to do anything about it.

The New Republic is well aware of the weaknesses of the Neutrality Act. We pleaded for a stronger measure while it was under consideration. One of the greatest of these weaknesses, as we pointed out at the time, was the section permitting the President to wait indefinitely before bringing the Act into effect. Every day's delay, of course, makes it more difficult to enforce the law, and increases the inequality with which it bears upon the two belligerents. Nevertheless, this situation, like nearly everything in human life, necessitates a choice between alternatives both of which are somewhat undesirable. It is our judgment that the difficulties and dangers created by putting the law into effect are far less than those created by a continuance of our present policy. After all, Mr. Secretary, the Americans do not want a permanent place in the Orient. Our trade and investments are small enough so that we could well afford to reimburse our citizens rather than to fight a war of even a few weeks' duration. What the American people want, as they have demonstrated over and over again, is peace. We urge you, Mr. Secretary, to implement that policy effectively, as regards the war zone, by getting out and staying out.

The Mediterranean Crisis

THE WORLD has seen such an unbroken succession of crises recently that one rather hesitates to use the word at all. Nevertheless, the new situation among the powers, in regard to the Mediterranean, certainly deserves the term, in its original force. In recent months, there have been repeated attacks upon neutral vessels in the waters adjacent to Spain. Many of these have been the work of submarines, and it is universally assumed that these submarines are Italian. Great Britain and France, at the beginning of this week, invited ten powers to join in a conference at which the whole question could be considered. Just as their invitations were going out, Russia suddenly sent a note to Italy stating that at least two of her ships had been sunk by Italian submarines, and she could prove it. Italy replied with the denial that was of course to be expected under the circumstances. Nevertheless, the whole situation is serious in the extreme. Europe has moved perceptibly nearer to the open and declared general conflict that has so long been feared.

No one should be surprised that this development has taken place. Both Mussolini and Hitler, but particularly the former, feel that their prestige is seriously involved in the Spanish war. Success there is almost literally a life-and-death matter for them. They have poured out men and money to win on the land. Why should they do the same at sea? The Spanish Loyalists are dependent in great degree upon supplies received from abroad. This is true not only of munitions but of gasoline and of some foodstuffs. An effective blockade would be worth a dozen divisions to Franco.

The difficulty about a blockade, of course, has been that neutral shipping was involved. Great Britain in particular, it has been assumed, would not sit by and see her ships sunk, her merchant sailors killed. For the fascist dictators, therefore, the question has become a delicate one. Just how far could they go in their attacks on neutral shipping without getting into serious trouble? We may take it for granted that they are not alarmed over conferences such as Great Britain and France have just called. A conference is chiefly a way of postponing issues the powers are not prepared to face. But the Russian note is something else again. It challenges Italy so sharply that a formal denial is not enough. Spain has been called "Europe's running sore." It begins to look as though the poison from this sore has now brought the whole Continent to the verge of the fatal malady of war.

Planning World Trade

EVER SINCE the depression, liberal-minded experts throughout the world have tried to speed a revival of international commerce. Significantly enough, the lead in this movement has been assumed, not by those who can make profits out of manufacture and selling, but rather by statesmen and economists who have a longer view. At first it was argued that international trade must grow before the individual nations could recover and reduce unemployment. Production, however, has grown much faster than the commerce among nations; recovery came first and dragged world trade after it, and at some distance. Now the emphasis has shifted. Recovery, it is argued, has been due largely to nationalistic policies, chief among which is armament manufacture and preparation for future war. Not only is there a danger that recovery so achieved will have a short life, but the avoidance of war itself requires that nations should be able to get what they need by peaceful trading rather than

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that they should be pushed toward the conquest of territory.

The British society, PEP (Political and Economic Planning), has issued this year a long and detailed report, which is the result of a good deal of research and discussion among competent individuals, concerning the foreign-trade problem. As would be expected from a group interested in planning, the old thesis that free trade and laissez-faire would be an automatic regulator and stimulus is discarded as impracticable under modern conditions. Of course protection is not accepted as a desirable panacea either. The point is made that changing technical and economic conditions themselves have brought a trend toward the manufacture of a larger proportion of necessities within each country; not so much specialization among nations is to be expected as in the nineteenth century.

Nevertheless, a healthy international trade is still of crucial importance to many nations—Great Britain among them—because of the impossibility of providing at home a sufficient amount of food and raw materials. Attempts to enlarge home production of such essentials often result in lowering rather than raising the level of living, because of the high cost involved. Even the Empire is not a sufficiently large and well balanced economic unit to be able to do without a large amount of foreign trade, as experience since the Ottawa agreements and the adoption of protection by Great Britain has demonstrated.

What is to be done? The obstructions to be removed are so many, and the complications so intricate, that one may question whether the problem can be solved before the effort to be self-contained for temporary military purposes explodes in a general war. Nations like Germany, Italy and Japan can, at the cost of heavy burdens on their populations, equip efficient armies and navies, but the only justification for such sacrifices must in the end be conquest which in turn can be converted into economic advantage. The military machines are worse than useless unless they can be employed, and employed in such a manner as to win large spoils in a relatively short war. Nevertheless the PEP experts have patiently attempted to unravel the tangled skein in order to recommend possible alleviating policies.

Chief among these recommendations are the following: Duties must be lowered to permit imports. Efforts to increase trade by bilateral agreements must be supplanted by multilateral agreements, since the bilateral arrangements are largely competitive in their effect, decreasing total world trade instead of enlarging it. In order to facilitate the growth of multilateral concessions, regional understandings—as in southeastern Europe—may first be encouraged. This will demand a relaxation of the "most-favored-nation" clause in existing trade treaties with nations outside the region in question. Cartels must be encouraged to pursue expansionist rather than restrictive and monopolistic policies; governments should both coöperate with them in this direction and intervene to protect the consumer. In colonies, there should be no discrimination among buyers and sellers of various nationalities. Efforts of producers to sell abroad should be paralleled by positive aid to the purchasing countries in enlarging the sales of their own products. Excess capital in the creditor nations should be used to diminish the capital shortage in the debtor ones. In the case of aggressive countries like Germany, this lending can only follow political understandings marking a reversal of present policy. In the case of undeveloped, raw-material-producing nations, there is much chance for new capital investment which in the end can be self-liquidating. Finally, there must be more assurance of exchange stability.

These are merely the more important requirements; other things as well are necessary, like directing intelligently the character of production in the highly developed industrial nations. Great Britain, for instance, should not attempt to have an agriculture to furnish her with crude foodstuffs which could be bought more cheaply elsewhere, but rather should strive to rehabilitate her farmers by encouraging them in the growth of specialties and high-grade perishables, and by making distribution more efficient.

If there is time, specific efforts of this type may bring some results. Short-sighted economic policies of the past few years may be gradually abandoned as their unfortunate results are borne in upon the individuals or groups responsible. One thing is certain—the economic and military nationalism of nations that cannot possibly be self-sustaining must be disastrous, if it is not quickly curbed. And it is futile to try to curb it by argument that the old ideal of free trade and unregulated commerce—which never really did exist to any great extent—can be imposed on the present world. The attempt to devise by intelligent planning a series of policies that can maximize the products available to the population of the world is a gallant one, even if at present it should prove hopeless. Some day, if civilization is to survive, things must be worked out along this line.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1937, IN THE U. S., BY EDITORIAL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 40 EAST 49TH STREET, NEW YORK.

EDITORS

BRUCE BLIVEN MALCOLM COWLEY R. M. LOVETT
GEORGE SOULE STARK YOUNG

ASSISTANT EDITORS

T. R. CARSKADON OTIS FERGUSON ELIZABETH HULING

TREASURER: DANIEL MEBANE

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

H. N. BRAILSFORD JOHN T. FLYNN WALDO FRANK
E. C. LINDEMAN W. P. MANGOLD JON. MITCHELL
LEWIS MUMFORD REXFORD G. TUGWELL

RATES: SINGLE COPIES, FIFTEEN CENTS; YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, FIVE DOLLARS; CANADIAN, FIVE DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS; FOREIGN, SIX DOLLARS; THREE MONTHS' TRIAL, ONE DOLLAR.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Roosevelt's Far Eastern Policy

AS THE Mikado's squat fighting men advance on a thousand-mile front in China, oblivious to treaties and foreign privileges, this country faces the possibility of becoming involved. What are the factors likely to determine our policy during the next few dangerous weeks?

The Men in the Pilot House.—A century ago, the family of Mr. Roosevelt's mother, the Delanos, were merchants trading in China. At a recent press conference, Mr. Roosevelt told in lively detail the part his forebears took in wangling the first foreign settlements from red-buttoned Chinese mandarins. Nevertheless, most observers agree he has little or no sympathy with Far Eastern business imperialism.

Number-two man is Mr. Hull. Traditionally, American Secretaries of State are supposed to be led by the nose by the British Foreign Office. Most observers think Mr. Hull will not be. During the Hoover administration he was a ranking Democratic member of the House, and watched the Manchurian crisis of 1931 from an intimate vantage point. He is known to have felt that Messrs. Hoover and Stimson were badly let down by Sir John Simon, then British Foreign Secretary. Moreover, Mr. Hull's single measuring rod for all men's virtue is their devotion to free international trade, and he has been greatly disappointed by the failure of England to sign a reciprocal trade treaty.

The top permanent official of the State Department concerned with Far Eastern affairs is Dr. Stanley K. Hornbeck, graying, kindly, professorial in manner. He has a gift for speaking in exquisitely phrased conundrums. Years ago, he taught in government colleges in China, and for a term was professor of Political Science at Wisconsin University. In 1917, Colonel E. M. House drafted him for the celebrated Group, which did preparatory work for the subsequent Versailles peace conference. Dr. Hornbeck is no pacifist, but his sheer technical competence is extraordinary. Few Presidents have had an abler diplomatic staff officer.

Johnny Bull.—Nearly two generations ago, when the Battle of Concessions died away, Tsarist Russia held Manchuria, England held middle China from Shanghai on the north to Hongkong on the south, France held the region bordering on Indo-China. Against this arrangement, Secretary of State John Jay protested with great heat. He upheld the right of American business men to plunder where they pleased, under the name of the Open Door.

Permanent State Department officials still regard the Open Door as sacred, and still think a basic divergence exists between American and British interests in the Far East. The State Department's aim is to prevent the imperialistic dismemberment of China; the aim of the British Foreign Office is simply to keep other powers from encroaching on the Shanghai-Hongkong area. In the Manchurian crisis of 1931, from one point of view, Mr. Stimson was first used by the British as a stick with which to threaten Japan, and then dropped in the gutter when Japan made clear her intention of remaining inside the old Russian sphere of influence to the north, and of leaving middle China untouched. Our permanent officials believe in the present affair the British will act in the same way, provided they can convince themselves that Japan means to stop with Chahar, Suiyuan, Shansi, Hopei and Shantung—the five provinces that wily, expressionless Major-General Kenji Doihara, almost exactly a year ago, named as Japan's objectives.

The Bells of Hell Go Ting-a-ling-a-ling.—Up to the moment this is written, the Neutrality Act of 1937, supposedly a solemn declaration of our future foreign policy, has had no discernible effect on Mr. Roosevelt's actions. As noted above, no one thinks Mr. Roosevelt will use the army and navy to support big-business imperialism in China. On the other hand, he shows no intention of withdrawing armed protection from the American merchants, teachers and missionaries who choose to remain in China, although this would seem to be implied by the Neutrality Act's spirit, if not its letter. Even should Japan blockade the coast of China, making the application of the Act legally inescapable, American nationals apparently are still to be safeguarded.

Is There a War Party?—As The New Republic has previously pointed out, the protection of American capital in China is economically absurd. The total value of American holdings in China, commercial, educational and religious, is estimated by the Department of Commerce at about $250,000,000, while the *annual* cost of keeping up our army and navy is about $1,000,000,000.

Why is it we do not abandon our nationals in China to their own resources? Why is it we still seem to be playing the dangerous game of international power politics? The favorite explanation in official Washington is that if we were to pursue what is acidly called a policy of scuttle, a war party would at once arise in America just as one arose in 1915 under the leadership of Theodore Roosevelt. Such a war party would draw into its ranks all Mr. Roosevelt's domestic political enemies; it would spread fear of the Yellow Peril from California eastward to the Atlantic; it would win the 1938 elections and throw us into a futile, long-drawn-out struggle in the Orient. I am bound

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to say that to me this explanation sounds phony. It rests on two assumptions: first, that the State Department's present policy will itself avoid war and, second, that a war party would gather to itself a considerable number of plain voters, both of which seem doubtful.

However, one circumstance deserves emphasis. Ordinarily American church-goers can be counted on to be strongly pacifist, and this is not true in the present crisis. As a group, the American churches are heavily involved on the Chinese side. Of all American investments in China, no less than one-fifth, or $50,000,000, represents church property, and with it the professional livelihood of thousands of church officials. Japan has made it a settled policy to discourage American missionary activity on the Asiatic mainland, and it is already being predicted that the great American educational and religious institutions around Peiping will never reopen their doors. It is thus conceivable that the Christian vote, or at least part of it, might some months hence go to a war party.

The Admirals.—Incongruously enough, the most potent pressure for peace now being brought on the State Department apparently comes from the Navy's General Board. For the moment, at any rate, the admirals are represented as stoutly set against armed adventure in the Far East, unless this country is assured of the full strength of England. The State Department's view that England will not seriously oppose Japan's absorption of the five northern provinces of China is set forth above. Mr. Roosevelt is an amateur seadog, and the admirals' opinion ought to have great weight with him.

It seems imprudent, however, to rely on the admirals' devotion to peace. Soon Japan's whole regular army, a quarter of a million men, will be in China, and there is no foretelling what madness its leaders may attempt. There is no very sound reason for thinking they will stop with the five northern provinces, and refrain from infringing on the British sphere of influence. If, instead of merely blowing thousands of Shanghai's inhabitants into gory fragments, they were to attempt to set up political control of the territory around the Shanghai International Settlement—as a year ago they set up the Hopei-Chahar Political Council around Peiping—British diplomatic and military opinion might stiffen greatly, and any show of genuine belligerence in London would find a reflected belligerence in our own Navy Department.

Japan's Advocate.—Although the administration generally makes little effort to conceal its pro-Chinese sympathies, the Department of Agriculture comes close to being pro-Japanese. With a record cotton crop coming, any slackening of Japanese purchases would greatly increase the problems of future production control. It should be emphasized that the Act, in itself, in no way prevents cotton sales to Japan. Under its terms, Japanese importers would be permitted to fulfill their normal requirements, and to be accommodated by normal short-term credits. But apparently officials of the Agriculture Department fear that Japan in retaliation might transfer her cotton purchases, as far as possible, to Brazil and other Latin American countries.

Washington. JONATHAN MITCHELL.

Why Not the Grand Jury?

"LUCKY" LUCIANO was put behind bars for the rest of his life because he was tsar of New York's vice racket. The power that put him there, along with 100 other racketeers, was that docile old juridical wheelhorse, the grand jury.

The notable fact is this: the substantial citizens of practically every community in the United States legally have a weapon with which to attack civic corruption in any form as effectively as was done in New York. For the famous Dewey prosecution was initiated not by an elected public official, but by a group of independent citizens—among them eight merchants, three bankers, three insurance men, two manufacturers, a warehouseman, a butcher and an engineer—acting under powers as old as common law and as fundamental as freedom of speech.

The grand jury was an established institution of English law long before the Norman conquest, and was originally designed to protect the individual from unjust prosecution by agents of the crown. It met in secrecy, was accountable to no one for its actions, and had the power of accusing, or indicting, any evildoer on evidence known to any of its members. Thus, as both shield and weapon for the common citizen, the grand jury survived many centuries of English history and was adopted in the federal and all the state Constitutions in America.

Today its use for the routine indictment of criminals is familiar. But its potentially greater function, as an independent body of citizens inquiring into the condition of their government, has been too commonly neglected. As a board of inquiry, it may summon witnesses and public officials, who, because the sessions are secret, may testify fully without fear of reprisal. It may instruct the district attorney to gather evidence; it can call him in and kick him out of its sessions; it can go over his head, and, if his conduct is wholly improper, indict him for malfeasance in office. So long as it is looking for evidence of crime—which takes in an immense territory—it can

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dig into anything without so much as a by-your-leave from judge, district attorney, Governor or political boss.

In this power to conduct general investigations lies the real dynamite of the modern grand jury. Many states, notably California and Georgia, have adopted "auditing" grand juries, which dispense entirely with routine indictment of criminals, and which convene automatically every six months for the sole purpose of dealing with matters of general welfare. Such a grand jury is fully aware that its job is to dig out incriminating dirt wherever it may be suspected. California's auditing grand juries hire their own independent accountants to go over public records. In Georgia they also check voting lists and tax assessments. When the system was installed in Michigan for counties of more than 200,000 population, the Detroit police noted with amazement that the cream of the local gangsters left town. It worked so well, in fact, that the local political machine finally managed to have it stricken from the statute books.

How does it happen, then, that this potent weapon has not been used more often before? Because ordinary citizens, swept as grand jurors into an unfamiliar world of juridical procedure, are not aware of their powers. Judges and district attorneys frequently take pains to see that they remain uninformed, for nothing can throw a well greased political machine so completely out of kilter as a grand jury that knows its strength.

New York's "runaway grand jury" of March, '35, which was directly responsible for the Dewey prosecution, is an object lesson in public service. To appreciate its achievement, however, we must realize the difficulties that faced it. Vast though its powers are, no grand jury can accuse a man of a crime unless it has evidence which it believes sufficient to convict him. It may fuss and fume, protest and abhor and set up a commendable clamor, but without evidence it cannot indict.

The grand jury has the power, under the law, to go out and gather such evidence itself, and many have done just that. But investigating a complicated crime structure requires a trained, full-time staff. For the bulk of its evidence, therefore, the grand jury looks to the district attorney, whose sworn duty is to gather such evidence.

Among the matters casually brought to the March grand jury's attention by the district attorney were certain facts bearing on rackets in New York City. The grand jury was evidently not convinced that the Tammany district attorney had done his utmost to gather evidence against the racketeers; this became increasingly apparent when they asked him to assign a satisfactory special prosecutor to rackets. Normally, the matter might have ended here.

But this grand jury knew its rights. It sent a scorching communication to the Governor of the state demanding a special prosecutor of caliber equal to handling the job. The story filled the papers; the grand jury's accusations shook the state. Jurors' lives were threatened, but they refused to be scared off. And the Governor gave them Thomas E. Dewey.

Its job done, the March grand jury was dissolved, and Dewey's corps of investigators set methodically to work. Their findings went to special grand juries; and a procession of the biggest, richest, most vicious and supposedly invulnerable racketeers in the business of crime started on its way to jail. The grip of fear in which the lords of crime had held the city was broken. The whole thing was started because a group of private citizens, serving as a grand jury, knew their powers.

That they did was no mere happenstance. It was the direct result of a movement started back in 1913, when an organization known as the Grand Jury Association of New York County was formed to "disseminate knowledge to grand jurors of their duties and obligations." Today the Association exercises national influence and is thoroughly unpopular with all our worst people. Grand jurors are invited to join at the time their names are drawn for service. Its roster includes some of the most important names in the city. It publishes a magazine, The Panel, which has a national circulation and conducts an unrelenting campaign to educate jurors to their powers and to keep before the successive grand juries the matters that most urgently need attention. As a private organization with the public good at heart, it is legally entitled to recommend names for the grand-jury lists. In this way it has aided immensely in improving the caliber of New York grand juries.

The Grand Jury Association has successfully pioneered in bringing to light such various matters as bail-bond reforms, "fences" for stolen goods and the need of a new courthouse and jail, a central fingerprint bureau and uniform state felony laws. And it has inspired imitation; similar associations now exist in all five counties of New York City and in eleven other cities. For eight years the Association was spurred and guided by Robert Appleton, a retired publisher who is now its honorary president. The present head is Lee Thompson Smith, foreman of the famous "runaway grand jury."

Largely because of the Association's steady propaganda, grand juries elsewhere are kicking over the traces. When nobody in New Jersey would touch the politically "hot" Wendel kidnaping case, aftermath of Governor Hoffman's intervention in the Hauptmann execution, a federal grand jury in New Jersey held its own investigation, indicted the chief suspects and had the satisfaction of seeing them convicted. In San Francisco a grand jury, as I write, is making it so hot for the local police administration that two of its three police commissioners have resigned under fire. After the exposure of the notorious Drukman case in Brooklyn, the grand jury was shocked at the political ramifications of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

affair. After they had disbanded, the jurors, as private citizens, brought formal charges against the district attorney. Later, when the Governor of the state exonerated him, they paid their own expenses for a trip to Albany to protest. It was sensational newspaper copy and resulted in a salutary public airing of the affairs of the district attorney's office. A Cleveland grand jury in 1933 was presented with a routine case of a taxi driver being beaten up by four arrogant gunmen. This grand jury did not confine itself to the case at hand; it traced the gunmen's connections, revealed the whole crime structure of Cleveland, and brought about a major exodus of thugs and an extensive shakeup in local officialdom.

The skeptic might ask if politicians, having succeeded in corrupting the rest of the local government, could not easily "rig" a grand jury to their liking. In most states, this danger is negligible. In a body of twenty-three men representing the community's best you may "reach" two or three; your chances of reaching twelve are extremely remote.

The method of selecting grand jurors varies somewhat from state to state, but that employed in New York is representative enough to serve as an illustration. At their annual meeting, the supervisors of each county prepare a list of 300 names of citizens definitely known to be persons of superior character. These names are written on separate slips of paper and deposited in a box. When a grand jury is required, fifty names are drawn by the county clerk, in the presence of the sheriff and a county judge. Those drawn are summoned to the court by the sheriff; twenty-three are sworn in as jurors, the rest excused. In some states, such as Illinois, selection is in the hands of county jury commissioners. In Illinois these commissioners are selected by a majority vote of all the judges in the state.

Once sworn in, these twenty-three men become the regular grand jury for that county for that term of court, usually a month. To them the district attorney presents evidence which he has gathered against criminals. If an indictment is voted, the accused must be brought to trial. If the jury suspects that the district attorney is withholding evidence, it may take any steps within its very extensive powers. And though normally dissolved when its own term of court is ended, it may if it wishes remain in session until it has satisfactorily completed the business before it. Occasionally there are cases so involved that the regular grand jury could not hear all the evidence and do anything else during its term. In this event, a special grand jury is called.

If passages of this article have dealt severely with district attorneys, it is not to imply that all district attorneys are hirelings of crime. As Courtney Riley Cooper has pointed out, "no office on earth permits of so much crookedness without danger of detection; so much political pressure; such opportunity to give every evidence of integrity, yet to doublecross honest citizenship." Yet many are honest, and do fine service.

With ancient common sense, the common law has handed down to us a check: a body of twenty-three "good and lawful men" with appropriate powers. Out of six years' experience with grand juries before he undertook to clean up New York, Thomas E. Dewey says: "I am profoundly convinced that the grand jury, in coöperation with honest and vigorous prosecution, can play a vital part in crushing the structure of organized crime."

There is your pat answer to the citizen who shrugs his shoulders at political rottenness and asks what a decent citizen can do about it anyway—and then moves heaven and earth to "get out of it" when called for grand-jury service. Actually, if he but knew it, the decent citizen can do more than anyone else in the world. Service on a grand jury demands the best any man has to offer. It demands judgment and restraint, as well as zeal, since power, poorly managed, can run amuck of its own momentum. The weapon is there, ready-made, and it is a deadly one. All we have to do is use it.

J. C. FURNAS.

The Learned Economists

ONE OF the merriest entertainments life affords nowadays is following the fervid debates of learned economists, especially those who have not yet observed that their science has been demoted to a position not flatteringly far in advance of astrology. The more dogmatic among them confront a situation resembling that which must have annoyed the map-makers after an ignorant upstart named Christopher Columbus raised the high probability that the earth was round instead of flat. However, his theory moved rapidly on to conclusive proof. In the science of economics (especially as related to monetary policies) we have about proved that the world isn't flat but we have not yet proved that it is round, or any other shape. Most of the demonstrating is being done by men who know very little about economics or money. The learned experts stand on the side-lines, saying (or yelling), "No! Oh, no! You can't do that!" And while they yell it is done. Perhaps not gracefully. In fact they usually do not prove anything conclusively. But they perform the impossible. And that is profoundly disturbing to gentlemen who sincerely thought they knew something with certainty.

I have been a student and observer in this whole broad field for a quarter of a century, not a practising professional. I have also served as special assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury. The difference between me and the professionals is that when I see my axioms topple into the garbage can I must laugh. Others suffer rising blood pressure.

Without the aid of algebra or charts, I can prove to you by simple arithmetic that Mussolini could not possibly have carried out his Ethiopian operations. His gold reserve, when last heard from, was about $300,000,000; and, considering what he was doing,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the difference between $300,000,000 and a thin dime was negligible. But he did it. Consequently if you were to offer me my choice of the affirmative or negative side of a bet that two and two make four, I would take the affirmative but I wouldn't offer odds. Too many facts that I knew just as well as the answer to two and two have turned out to be questionable.

For example, I know positively that when the gold reserve behind a currency is less than two percent that country has no currency; panic and chaos are inevitable. It cannot possibly carry on foreign trade. But we have in the world today a country that depends very largely on foreign trade and it has almost no gold reserve yet it goes on doing business. Moreover it has an enormous internal debt, and foreign debt, both private and governmental. Also much of that debt is in default. In terms of standard economics Germany is a corpse, but the corpse doesn't fall down. On the contrary it sends battleships to Spain, demanding law and order.

Since my early twenties I have known, beyond the possibility of doubt, that if ever Great Britain repudiated a governmental debt, that would be THE END! Well, you know the answer, and I need not say more. Great Britain's recovery from depression is one of the most encouraging facts in our present-day world. Our loss has not wrecked us or stopped trade. On the contrary, the law sponsored by Senator Johnson of California, prohibiting any more lending to nations in default, has probably been more effective than any other single factor in preventing the next world war. We can rejoice that the debt was repudiated. All humanity is better off for it. There is even the possibility that the next world war never will occur because of the repudiation and the Johnson act. Economics? Excuse my giggles.

Twenty years ago I knew positively that there was no such thing as going off the gold standard. You could reduce the gold content of your dollar or pound or mark but it would simply be valued, thereafter, in terms of its gold content, and you were still on the gold standard. The whole proceeding would be ridiculous and futile. At present most of the nations of the earth are off the gold standard. And virtually all of the recovery from depression is taking place in those nations. If what I used to know so positively were true, France and the tiny gold bloc should have been the spearhead of recovery. While still faithful, they had the hardest struggle of all. Sweden adopted a managed currency in 1931 and has had no depression. The Swedish management has been marvelous and comes close to proving something in a mad world. Our own country's experience also comes close to proving something. In 1932 our exports of automobiles had about ceased because the other nations had depreciated their currencies and the dollar cost so much that our customers could not buy. Then, in 1933, we depreciated the dollar, and they could again buy. Automobile exports rose rapidly and are now close to the 1929 zenith. In his public statements and reports of the General Motors Corporation, Mr. Alfred P. Sloan Jr. clearly shows that he traces no connection between increased foreign sales and governmental monetary policy. If Mr. Sloan is right, the corporation ought to triple the salaries of its foreign salesmen. All of them must be Grade A geniuses.

Theoretically the foreign value of money should very soon become the domestic or internal value. That is what the experts told me twenty-five years ago. But it doesn't seem to work out that way. Japan has vastly increased her foreign sales, largely as a result of reducing the gold content of the yen. You buy an article of Japanese manufacture at a ridiculous price, but the yen, when it reaches Japan, seems to buy about as much food, clothing, and housing as formerly. Well, there is a new form of magic. The same thing happens with the General Motors Corporation. The fifty-nine-point-six dollars it receives for its products abroad are just as welcome to its wage earners and stockholders as the lamented gold-standard dollar. The Liberty League groans and all directly concerned prosper. Economics? Spare my blushes!

Meanwhile we have flocks and coveys of economists reporting that world recovery is impossible until the principal trading nations return to the gold standard and stabilize their currencies upon it. That is one of the axioms I used to cherish. But I now see that the principal obstacle to restoration of world trade as it flourished before 1914 is the fear of another world war. For example, if this country were to offer to give France all her wheat, absolutely free, France would not dare accept the offer of this boon unless we guaranteed to deliver it under the protection of the United States navy in the event of a war involving France. Without that guarantee France would do better to raise her own wheat regardless of cost; and that is what France is doing. In terms of standard economics the procedure is idiotic and ruinous. But is it, really? Your guess would be as good as mine. Or Einstein's.

The trouble with most economists (including my amateur self) is that we were born, and educated, under the gold standard, and we now live in a world that has proved the bayonet standard just as effective. Most of us don't even know that there is such a thing as the bayonet standard . . . and don't believe that there could be. But it is all around us, and in spots flourishing. "This is money," says the Dictator. "Accept it, or else." They accept it, and it is money. Do you know the ancient story of the stranger who came into a city with a counterfeit hundred-dollar bill and passed it? The bill went round and round, paying thousands of dollars' worth of debts and finally came out in the hands of the criminal. He left the community with the bill tucked in his pocket. Any harm done? Well, you answer that one. I pass. What is money, anyway?

At this moment Russia is the second gold-producing country of the globe. And Russia doesn't believe in gold. Russia would prefer to pay for her foreign purchases in useful goods such as furs, wood pulp,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

manganese, platinum and numerous other articles, all of which are needed in this country. But we, with the largest gold stock in the world, want more gold. So Russia pays in gold. Considering present world tendencies toward successfully managed currencies, how the Russians must laugh! The theory, of course, is that with gold in hand you can buy anything else you need. But can you? We live in a world overshadowed by war clouds. Not necessarily our own war but other wars might cut off our needed supplies of manganese, platinum, diamonds (for use in industry), hemp, jute, tin, and I could name a dozen other items. According to orthodox economics gold is the answer to all of those problems. With it you can buy anything. I am inclined to think I would take payments in what we really cannot get on without. I am not sure that the gold standard is going to survive. And for me that is equivalent to a Roman Catholic admitting doubt about God.

Looking back over the depression years, I try to determine accurately the losses. In terms of the general welfare (and civilization is at stake), if you owned a building that was once valued at one million dollars and is now valued at half that figure, you still have the building. Or it is still there, even if you don't own it today. Therefore, no loss. What has been lost? I should say that it is the billions of man-hours of useful labor that, somehow, could not be mobilized. That is what we have lost. The earth goes on its course around the sun, heeding no human. We must adjust our problems to that fact. And we failed to do so. At least most of us failed. Economics? Money? Monetary policies? All froth, I fear, unless they keep the wheels turning; men at work and well fed. Whoever does that is right; everyone else is wrong. And, tragic fact, there is no scientific course. In economics we are beginning again from scratch. What we used to know may help if we view it warily. Otherwise it will do more harm than good. If we can't laugh we are lost. But I am optimistic. The definitive line between the beasts and mankind is that our side laughs. CHESTER T. CROWELL.

To Madrid

III: *Offensive on Two Fronts*

A FEW hours after we first arrived in Valencia, I had begun hearing that the republican army would soon be taking the offensive.

A photographer drew us aside to whisper an important piece of news to Dick Mowrer. He had ridden down from Madrid in an army truck. Along a back road he passed more than ten miles of guns —big guns—and tanks that were waiting for darkness to move up to the front. There was more artillery on that one road than he had seen during his first six months in Spain. At Albacete he had heard that all but the most seriously wounded were being evacuated from the American hospitals in order to make room for new cases. The government was planning a big push; there was absolutely no doubt of it.

Later that evening there was a reception at the headquarters of the Spanish writers' union, the Alianza. I talked with a Dutch writer named Jef Last, tall, thin, tired and fragile-looking, who had been fighting on the Madrid front for more than ten months and was now a captain in the Spanish regular army. He explained to me why it was that the republican troops had so far been unable to carry out a general offensive. When their attacks reached a point within four hundred yards of the enemy lines, the problem was how to maintain superiority of fire. It couldn't be done without automatic rifles or light machine guns, whereas the Loyalists had only heavy machine guns and army rifles. Sometimes, by sacrificing their men, they made important gains in spite of their faulty equipment, but they had so far lacked the reserve forces that would have enabled them to withstand a counter attack; that was why they had to retreat from La Granja after a really brilliant advance. . . . He paused for a moment, as if shaking off his fatigue. "But we have now some light machine guns. We are making reserve forces, a great number. The next time, it will be different—and the next time will be sooner than you expect."

I crossed to another corner of the room, where I had recognized an English novelist now serving as a political officer with the International Brigades. He wanted to talk about the new Spanish army. "The young conscripts," he said, "are actually better soldiers than the first volunteers. They have less dash, perhaps, and less political consciousness, but they hate the Fascists just as much and they are more amenable to discipline. Very soon they'll get a chance to show their fighting qualities." He lowered his voice. "They may be going into the lines at this very moment."

Walking home through the darkened streets, we were stopped by a man whom I had known in New York as a reporter out of a job. At present he was working for the American hospital in Albacete. He told us that the photographer had been right about the evacuation of all the lightly wounded; they were being sent to rest homes farther in the rear. What was more, the director of the hospital had been asked to prepare for handling sixteen hundred new cases every day until further notice. We could guess what that meant. . . .

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Everybody in Spain seemed to know something new about the offensive. Even Queipo de Llano had mentioned it in one of his facetious broadcasts from Seville. He had begged the Loyalists to hurry because, he said, the Moors were waiting to gobble them up. That is the way with military plans in Spain: the whole world hears about them, including the general staff of the opposing army. But this time, surprisingly, there was a difference. Nobody knew just where the attack would take place, and nobody knew just when.

I didn't think much about it during the long drive to Madrid. There were troops and guns on the road, but not in any unusual numbers. The Madrid evening papers of July 5 had no exciting news. I decided that the rumors had been false, or that the offensive was going to be delayed. But early next morning, at the door of the hotel, I heard a peculiar low throbbing and booming that was almost like a thunderstorm in the next county. It suggested something else besides—the rumble of the guns as you heard it in 1917, when it was carried to Paris by a northeasterly wind. The Loyalist offensive had opened on the Sierra front.

That same morning the writers' international congress convened for its first session in Madrid.

There were two reasons why it was meeting in this beleaguered town. One of these was a matter of simple and almost routine courtesy. At the first writers' congress, held in Paris two years before, the Spanish delegates had invited their colleagues to hold a second congress in Madrid. They had repeated the invitation in London, at a meeting of the executive committee in June, 1936, just a month before the military revolt; and this time it had been formally accepted. In one sense, you could say that they were merely keeping an engagement. In another sense they were of course doing much more. This civil war transformed into an international war has engaged the sympathies of writers in all countries; and there is no doubt that most of them have taken the government side. To hold a literary congress in Madrid was a means of stating this fact; it was a means of telling the Spanish writers and soldiers that they were not fighting alone.

The first plans were announced in the Paris papers of November 6—that is, on the day that Franco's Moors were fighting in the Madrid streets. During the next eight months, the city was under fire and short of food; the congress had to be postponed more than once. Always the date of it had to be kept secret, for fear that Franco would provide his own reception committee. Invitations had to be carefully issued for fear of admitting provocators or spies or simple trouble-makers—since what would be an amusing literary scandal in New York or Paris might have dangerous echoes in a country at war, especially in view of the Anarchist-Trotskyist uprising in Barcelona. There were all sorts of difficulties growing out of the non-intervention agreement. The British delegates as originally chosen were refused passports by their Foreign Office, which leans toward the Fascists. A new delegation had to be named and smuggled across the border. The German exiles were afraid of carrying passports with a Spanish visa; they might be barred from returning to France or Austria. The hardships of travel in the war zone made it physically impossible for some of the older writers, like Heinrich Mann. His brother Thomas was ill in Switzerland.

Considering all these obstacles—and considering, too, the natural individualism and indiscipline of literary people—it is a wonder to me that the congress ever assembled in Paris, or got itself across the border after only a few hours of delay, or traveled for several hundred miles along Spanish roads reserved for military traffic. Once in Madrid, it made a pretty impressive showing. There were seventy-five or eighty delegates from twenty-eight countries scattered over the world from China and Iceland to Chile. Latin America was strongly represented. There was a fair sprinkling of men and women with international reputations—from France, Malraux and Benda and Chamson; from England, Stephen Spender and Sylvia Townsend Warner; from the Soviet Union, Tolstoy, Fadayev and Ehrenbourg; from Denmark, Hans Anderson Nexö. They were joined by a Spanish delegation that included Bergamin (a Catholic, head of the writers' alliance), Alvarez del Vayo (till recently Foreign Minister) and Machado and Alberti (regarded as the two great Spanish poets, since the death of Garcia Lorca). They were also joined by writers from the International Brigades: Ludwig Renn, Gustav Regler, Ralph Bates. Here were people whose books I had admired or argued about. Meeting them in Madrid, I could look forward to an interchange of experience, observation, theory. . . .

But the congress in Madrid encountered another difficulty that had not been foreseen. Loyalist Spain, during its battles with Moors and Germans and Italians, has become intensely and justifiably proud of itself as a nation. It doesn't want the mere pity of well meaning foreigners: it wants their admiration and it wants material aid. In the meantime it is determined to fight its own battles. The Spanish government officials who dealt with the congress were for the most part writers themselves; in any case they were men of broad culture concerned with literary problems. But in their preoccupation with the civil war, they could not help regarding the congress as an offensive on the cultural front. As such it was less important than the military offensive that had opened west of Madrid.

I don't mean to say that the writers were urged to think or speak on any given topics. Nobody guided the course of the discussion. But in the air of this really heroic city trying to free itself from an eight-months' siege, it was almost impossible to talk about literary questions—about realism or the nature of the contemporary hero or the problem of creating novels for and by the working class. In-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stead people talked about the immediate struggle, often in terms of political slogans. Sometimes the discussion was very nearly drowned out by the sound of the guns.

This martial atmosphere was strongest at the two meetings in Madrid on July 6. They were held under the honorary chairmanship of General Miaja, the commander-in-chief. Soldiers stood guard at either side of the platform; in the intense heat I could see the sweat rolling down their foreheads and making them blink their eyes. A good military band played selections, but played them too often; during each rendition of the "International" and the new Spanish anthem, we stood at attention, raising our clenched fists. Speakers succeeded one another on the rostrum, under the glare of the searchlights—a Cuban Negro poet, a German exile, a Bulgarian once condemned to death and released after eight years in prison, a Pole from the Dombrowski Battalion, a Frenchman from the Marty Battalion, a whole parade of nations to say in their different languages that the Spaniards were fighting our fight, that we were with them in body and spirit.

I remember the appearance of the speakers much better than anything they said. There was Stephen Spender, tall, slim, with wavy hair, a shirt open at the neck and a general look of being Shelley astray in the twentieth century; there was Julien Benda, short, with gray bangs that made him resemble a seated statue of the Emperor Augustus; there was thin, dark, elusive, birdlike José Bergamin; there was Alexis Tolstoy, plump, bald-crowned, bearing with him an aura of success, of two million copies sold in Soviet Russia and translations all over the world; there was Sylvia Townsend Warner looking like a very pleasantly daft English spinster (say her own Lolly Willowes); there was Ludwig Renn, very tall, with his eyes smiling behind steel-rimmed spectacles and his head cocked to one side as if he were always leaning down to catch an inaudible voice from the world of shorter men; there were Vishnievski and Stavski, the roaring boys from Moscow—the first looking like a jolly sailor on shore leave, which is exactly what he was; the second six feet tall and three feet broad, with a huge nose, a low forehead and ears standing straight out from his skull, which was completely shaven, so that he had the air of being a convict in a Mack Sennett comedy—but such a friendly convict that everybody grinned at him and shook his enormous hand. . . .

Thinking back on the writers there, I feel that they had a common quality of warmth and humanness—almost of recklessness—that set them apart from any other large group of writers I have seen together. In their own countries they were men of individual ideas. Even here, in this meeting behind the trenches, some of them were saying keen or moving or subtle things, as I discovered afterwards when reading the reports of their speeches; but I was distracted by the heat and the confusion of tongues; all I caught for the moment were the patriotic slogans—and I have a very low capacity for listening to patriotic slogans. In my notebook I find the record of a dialogue with Sylvia Townsend Warner, half in my handwriting, half in hers:

> M.C.—*"Abajo fascismo! Viva el proletario español! Salud!"* As used by the last speaker these belong in the aw nuts department. He used them to get a hand.
>
> S.T.W.—The Spanish are too damned taken up with their own affairs to care for German anti-fascism. So the German baited his remarks, which referred to his own national struggle.
>
> M.C.—But when you see those French writers going out for a smoke, you realize that he's been baiting for moths with moth balls and for mosquitoes with eucalyptus oil.
>
> S.T.W.—Not all writers are well disciplined.
>
> M.C.—Writers' congresses usually go on in the lobby.
>
> S.T.W.—Did you hear that *bomb?*

The bomb put an end to our dialogue for the moment—and besides, the next speaker turned out to be much more interesting. Before the end of his address, there was an interruption of a more welcome sort. A detachment of soldiers rushed up to the platform carrying two Fascist banners taken at Brunete, and the uniform of a captured Fascist colonel, and a whole handful of women's gold lockets which this same colonel had appropriated in the course of a raid on the civilian population. The soldiers announced that an advance of sixteen kilometers had been made since daybreak. Their offensive—the other offensive—was succeeding beyond expectations.

And our offensive, too, went better on the following days. Back in Valencia, on July 10, there was an extraordinarily fine meeting at which Fernando de los Rios paid a tribute to his dead friend, the poet Lorca. Louis Aragon, at a later meeting in Paris, read an important paper in defense of literary nationalism. In the end, the congress was not without literary results, though it was more important as a demonstration of international solidarity. But that is running considerably ahead of my story.

Madrid, July 6.—We dine late in the evening, after the second meeting. The writer-delegates from the International Brigades are full of high spirits. For us, this congress is a serious business; for them, it is a magical escape into civilian life and the company of pretty women. They wheel a little piano into the center of the room and begin to play all their marching songs, including an interminable series of parodies on "La Cucaracha." The big hotel is shaking at every chorus. Suddenly I notice that the waiters are closing the windows and pulling down the shutters. The lights go out one by one; the last chorus dies. In the silence we can hear a shell bursting only a few hundred yards away; then another that seems nearer.

Gradually—in utter darkness now, except for the glowing tips of cigarettes—we are herded to the lower floors of the hotel, to wait until the bombard-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment has ended. Here are a hundred sedentary people, civilians, bookmen; most of them are under fire for the first time. They react in different fashions. One nice Frenchwoman runs up to me and insists that I must keep Anna Louise Strong from going into the street, from going into the street and getting killed—speaking with the sort of brave calm that verges on hysteria. Others seem totally indifferent. Going down the stairs I stumble into one group arguing in French about André Gide's trip to the Soviet Union, saying nothing new with great eloquence. For my own part I feel a curious elation, which undoubtedly is shared by others. It had seemed a little cheap to come as tourists to this city that had suffered so much. Now at last we are partly justified by sharing its dangers.

The explosions are becoming less frequent. A group of us, including Anna Louise Strong and all the English delegates, go out into the street and watch the ambulances clanging past. A big fire is burning two blocks away, on the Puerta del Sol, and we decide to go down and look at it. There isn't much to see. The flames burn with a cold light, almost like a magnesium flare. The firemen work in absolute silence. And this conflagration in the heart of a city is watched by no one—by no one except two policemen on duty and half a dozen timid British and American writers peering round the corner so as to be safe from steel fragments.

The end of the world, I think, will be like this—not a sudden immense catastrophe but a slow attrition, as in Madrid: a building burned at night, another building demolished, a street car wrecked, a shop closed because the owner is dead—not a great disaster but an accumulation of small disasters, while people carry on their business and try to repair the damage, never quite fast enough to keep up with the attacks of the enemy. The end of the world will be like this—and I am sure that even during the last months there will be writers, deeply, stirred, who will hold congresses at which the discussions will be inflated with martial hope and eventually drowned out by the guns.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

This is the third of a series of footnotes on the Spanish war. They will be continued in succeeding issues.—THE EDITORS.

Dialectical Round

The stone that weights the arch,
The cable men unreel,
Provoke the winds that moan,
Provide the winds that search
The filaments of steel
In search of something flown
Beyond the roar of torch,
Beyond the turn of wheel,
Beyond the weight of stone.

ROLFE HUMPHRIES.

Washington Notes

What the Congressional Liberals Might Do—Bargains with the Southern Leaders—Talking Out a Program—European Precedents

LAST WEEK this space was devoted to a criticism of Mr. Roosevelt's leadership at the last session of Congress, together with a plea that the liberals in Congress henceforth unite, and insist on Mr. Roosevelt's sharing his power with them. This is no new idea; recently it has been discussed publicly and privately by scores of persons in Washington. This week I should like to set forth practical ways and means by which it might be done. On Constitution Day, September 17, Mr. Roosevelt apparently means to make a great program speech, and political warfare will begin anew. The present week is perhaps the last time in many months that this department can stroke its long white beard, and talk about this-and-that with the cash customers.

A liberal group exists already in the House. In brutal truth, two groups exist, the so-called Liberal Bloc under Mr. Gerald J. Boileau of Wisconsin and the Mavericks of Mr. Maury Maverick of Texas, and the relationship between them is something less than perfect. This is our first problem. It is arguable that the chief single disaster to befall liberalism in America during the last ten months was not the loss of last May's strike in Little Steel, nor the formation of fascist groups in Johnstown, Pa., and Michigan, but the printing of an article on the House liberals by Dr. Stanley ("Old Butterfingers") High, a few weeks ago in The Saturday Evening Post. Perhaps through unfamiliarity with his subject, Dr. High unfairly slighted Mr. Boileau and his followers, while greatly praising the Mavericks. The resultant heart-burnings were more than any outsider can conceive. Organized liberalism in Washington just missed shipwreck.

The first job that has to be done is to heal these wounds, and bring the liberals of the House together. In my opinion, the chief cause of the fairly petty jealousies that exist among them is simply that, under Mr. Roosevelt's manner of running the government, they have had no real work to do. With no solid achievements in which to take pride, they have tended to magnify details of prestige to comic proportions. A little sweat would accomplish a great deal.

The next problem is that of the so-called Southern reactionaries. What use is it to attempt anything, when you are sure to be frustrated by the sheer otiose mass of Southern bourbonism now found in the Democratic Party? That is the line taken by Mr. Roosevelt's apologists, to explain his defeats of the last session. I do not wish to be rude, but such talk gives me a sharp pain. Who are these vicious, red-jawed reactionaries waiting to gobble up little liberals? Mr. Roosevelt's apologists usually cite as examples Vice President Garner and Senators Pat Harrison and Jimmy Byrnes. All very well, but it just happens that all three men have nearly flawless New Deal voting records.

The menace of Southern Democratic conservatism to a liberal movement in Congress is largely fake. Liberals regularly make the error of imputing to conservatives the kind of ideals they themselves have. Carter Glass of Vir-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ginia, Josiah Bailey of North Carolina, Cotton Ed Smith of South Carolina may be conscientious reactionaries, but precious few other Southerners are. They have deep convictions about congressional patronage, but about little else. For the first three or four years of the New Deal, they faithfully voted for Mr. Roosevelt, because it was the popular thing to do. Now they are against him, not because they oppose, or even understand, his program, but because they believe he is slipping.

What sort of terms could liberals make with the Southern House leaders—with men like Speaker Bankhead, Majority Leader Rayburn, Chairman Doughton of the Ways and Means Committee? Liberals must assure them they will be left unmolested in their titular privileges. Liberals must also show them that the measures they intend to bring forward are, among other things, good vote-catchers. Except for a few individuals like Mr. Eugene E. Cox of Georgia, whose orneriness approaches the psychopathic, it is a reasonable bet that the Southern House leaders will be the same helpful, eminently practical politicians they were from 1933 to 1935.

The liberals of the House are bound not to fight Mr. Roosevelt. It would be utter waste and tragedy if they did. But once they are organized, it will be the duty of a chosen committee to wait on Mr. Roosevelt, and say something like this:

"We are your friends. True enough, we want to use you, but then you can also use us. Whatever we accomplish will stand to your credit in the history books. But let us come down to business. We wish to make complaints. In the last session, we didn't like your sending us on the run after six new Justices of the Supreme Court, when with a little good sense and temper you could have had two Justices, which would have been enough. Our energies were squandered for nothing. We didn't like your seeming to stand for a generous relief program, and then abruptly throwing half a million souls off the WPA. We didn't like your seeming to support the CIO, and then behaving as you did in the strike in Little Steel. In a word, henceforth we want a chance to talk things over with you beforehand, and a chance to approve or reject."

Whether or not the leaders of the House liberals have the stamina to face Mr. Roosevelt with such a proposal, I have no way of knowing. Nor do I know whether Mr. Roosevelt would agree to it. But it is plain that unless the House liberals are united among themselves, and unless they have a working arrangement with Mr. Roosevelt, all talk of a liberal movement in Washington is so much moonshine. It would be better to forget about it, and turn to something else.

How precisely would a liberal group in Congress go about obtaining its ends? Its leaders would do an immense amount of long-winded, tedious talking. They would talk over what the plain voters back in their home districts wanted, or thought they wanted. From the talk ought to emerge a program that voters would recognize and support. Mr. Roosevelt and his advisers have usually functioned in the opposite manner. They have decided what they themselves thought the country needed, and then tried to sell their proposal. The Western farmers, for example, wanted punitive action against the Chicago grain and meat brokers, and Mr. Roosevelt undertook to sell them soil conservation. It was not until Dr. Townsend enrolled a million dues-paying club members that Mr. Roosevelt appreciated the fact that the country wanted the Social Security Act, in a hurry. Most New Deal measures have been admirable, but at least some of them have been either politically premature or belated. Liberal Congressmen, endlessly talking shop, ought to know what the voters are ready for.

With a program drafted, and with Mr. Roosevelt's approval obtained, the liberals would have to talk matters over with the official Democratic leaders of the House. With their own strength, and with the strength that would come to them from Mr. Roosevelt's formal blessing, it is incredible that they should have serious difficulties. Quite probably one or another of the Southern conservatives would ask for amendments. It would be the task of Messrs. Boileau, Maverick and their colleagues to decide whether he should be humored. A final step would be the summoning of the official Democratic Party caucus. Since the Wisconsin Progressives and Minnesota Farmer-Laborites are not entitled to vote in the Democratic caucus, certain observers have suggested that later a caucus might be arranged for all three parties. Such action would bind 356 Congressmen to vote for each approved measure.

Briefly stated, two great changes would be brought about: the House would operate democratically, which it certainly has not done heretofore under Mr. Roosevelt, and it would be led by a liberal steering committee. It would mean that the liberal Congressmen could go to work. They could explain and defend a liberal program. Half the time under Mr. Roosevelt's leadership, they have not known what his program was, nor understood it when they did know. Since they would have drafted the liberal program themselves, they would presumably be prepared to fight and die for it. Mr. Roosevelt may be the most persuasive radio talker now living, but several score Congressmen speaking in their home districts, and writing their constituents, might perform greater practical good. In contrast to its sometimes jack-rabbit speed since 1933, the legislative process would become extremely lengthy and cumbersome, but probably few mistakes would be made. And since, joined by the strictly Roosevelt following, the liberals would have an easy majority of the present House, the bills that they introduced and put through the party caucuses would be enacted.

This department hopes that its customers will not think that democracy in Congress has become an *idée fixe* with it. But it was a heart-breaking experience at the last session to see the fine talents of liberals in Senate and House completely ignored. A one-man liberal movement, even if the man is Mr. Roosevelt, is still not a movement. Mr. Roosevelt is fond of buttressing his actions with examples from Europe. I hope he will some day remember that that ultimate citadel of reaction, the British Tory Party, never moves without repeated party caucuses whose decision the Prime Minister and Cabinet must scrupulously honor. As for French political leaders, the majority of them do not dare to so much as say "bock" to a café waiter without first summoning a full-dress party convention with bands, bunting and wall-posters.

T. R. B.

Washington.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Other People's Money

Stock Prices Still Too High—The Forgotten Commission and the Forgotten Man—What's Wrong with the Building Industry?

THE STOCK market continues to trouble its managers and its customers. Shares move with leaden feet, prices sag and the promise of riches grows pale. If you look at the business-activity-index lines of the various papers you see business rising. But if you look at that anxiously followed line which marks the course of stock prices you see a different picture.

Back in April the combined average of The New York Times's stock index was around 143. Then it began to lose life, and sank by the end of June to about 120. At this point it staged a bit of a rally and for about six weeks it rose again until the middle of August, getting near 135. Then it went into a more or less precipitate decline. In two and a half weeks all the gains of the preceding six weeks have been wiped out. It is down now practically to where it was last June.

Of course, if you read the financial pages, you will learn that government policies are all responsible for this. The war in the Far East takes a little of the blame, but it is the fear of taxes, the baiting of business, the severity of Mr. Landis' mild little SEC and Mr. Roosevelt's "Red" leanings which produce all this lethargy. It seems never to occur to these commentators that stocks are too high for sound investment.

In Washington at the Federal Trade Commission complaints from all over the country are coming in about high prices and about various sorts of trade agreements as the reason. With the coming of the NRA the Federal Trade Commission went into an eclipse. Enforcing the anti-trust laws against trade agreements was of course not possible, since the NRA suspended those laws. Since the NRA was knocked out, enforcement has been equally difficult. First of all, the government has been in a weak position in attempting to enforce laws against performances into which, only a little while before, business men were being begged and coerced under the NRA. But in the next place, the administration has never quite gotten over the idea that combinations, price agreements, production agreements, are good things in spite of the Supreme Court. It has therefore not been interested in implementing the Federal Trade Commission to carry on its work effectively. Its requests for appropriations have been pared down and it has been hamstrung in other ways. This might not be so difficult to understand if the Republicans were in power, and indeed, the budget bureau is still manned by the men who were named by Coolidge, Harding and Hoover. They have not been friendly to the Commission. That is easy to understand. But the President has done nothing to help. Perhaps he has never recovered from the criticism by the FTC of his ill starred NRA. The President, as the country is now finding out, is a vindictive person. He resents criticism bitterly. And he is not likely soon to forget the Commission's criticism of his pet scheme—the NRA.

From his own point of view, this is too bad. Because there is nothing that is so likely to give him and his New Deal a fatal blow as the continuing rise of prices. Some of this comes from expanding purchasing power, and some of it from the tolerance of high prices based on the President's own policy of boosting prices to the 1926 level—not yet reached, by the way. But much of it, also, comes from endless trade agreements, trade price formulas, production agreements, national restrictions on competition.

If the President is wise, he will take the FTC under his wing. He will see that it gets the money it needs. It can be counted on to be a valiant champion of the little man in business, and of the consumer. And, as it turns out, at this moment the FTC is singularly well manned.

This commission was organized by Woodrow Wilson just before the War. The coming of the War rendered its functions somewhat unimportant. When the War ended, Harding, Coolidge and Hoover came into power and the Commission was diverted completely from its great objective. It became an arm of big business. It performed only one good job and that was an accident—the famous utility investigation. But now it must be conceded that the President's appointments have been good ones and all the commissioners—Democrats and Republicans—are sincerely devoted to the enforcement of the laws under which they function. The President can do himself a great service by putting that commission to work and supplying it with the necessary funds. Above all the agencies in Washington it is the best friend of the forgotten man.

One spot where this commission could do a most important work of investigation, at the very least, would be in the building industry. This year started off with fairly bright prospects for an active year in building—particularly home building. By the time the summer had arrived, building contracts were well above last year. Yet at the very start of the summer this encouraging rise came to an end. Many contracts actually recorded were dropped. Many plans considered were abandoned. And all this was because of the rise in prices and because of the many bad situations in the building-craft unions. If these matters are not corrected by next year, the building industry will probably pass into almost complete eclipse, and the New Deal will come tumbling around Mr. Roosevelt's ears. The best instrument he can use to combat this is the Federal Trade Commission.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

Vista

IN YEARS past I have not seldom made a practice of thinking back over the season that the current summer had ended and trying to bring into my mind and into my heart and imagination those things, moments, flights or, as it were, miracles, that remained after the theatre's effort was spent and over, and that clustered themselves into a glow and splendor, and a fecundation of life, not easily blurred or forgotten. From these I would write a sort of outline of the season's vista. But to do that all over again this year seemed only a repetition, sheer journalism—as if journalism's soul did not consist of a combination of the essentially repetitious and vulgar with the insistently banal! And I who know the smallness of my voice and the tiny stink of all our journalistic voices repeated, wonder if any words of mine could matter much, and whether it would not be more to the distinction and glory of the theatre and these mo-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mentary summits achieved to leave them wherever they are in recollection. Perhaps too it is because in the country each thing seems to have its due of its own rest, its beginning and fullness and completion.

Never did it seem truer than now within this scene that ripeness is all. Looking out under the apple trees, old orchard shades above the mown sward underneath, and at the lines of the pasture walls, as often as not against the sky, and further away at the hills beyond, their rich shadows on richer fields, and the Connecticut security of an old, worked land, I am not apt to be writing of theatre things that have already been, or perhaps even of the theatre at all. And whether or not that might have been a good resolve becomes an idle question, some one opens a door and calls to me, George Copeland is on the radio, even then the sound fills the orchard where I sit. It is the "Malagueña," of course, but almost at the end of the first movement, so I do not know whether it is actual playing or a record. At any rate the notes are suddenly indistinguishable from the leaves; the stream of the rhythm, so perfect that there seems running through it a line of silence, living abstraction, moves on out into everything, and the bright surface of the sound seems that of the air. What would be some of the notations for this season of 1936-37 after all? What comes into the mind as having some of what is in this moment? Heard thus in the midst of nature, this music shares with nature the same quality, fluid and exact.

As to the last season I could never see that it was so much worse, as was so often said, than plenty of others going before it. If the theatre of ten to fourteen years ago was another matter, with life and genius to it, last season comfortably took its place alongside divers others. But theatre managers, actors, critics, some of whom had done more and some less for the theatre's good, authors and what not got themselves into a considerable lather, met four or five days in argument, reproach and exhortation, like Epictetus' letters of the alphabet quarreling together; and blame for the state of things was tossed about like stage money.

It seems to me that we might as well say that biology or that weather will cease as to say the theatre will. A part of its blessing and disaster is its immediacy and nearness to our vitality. Knowledge of that doubtless was one of the things that spurred this weeping congress of its lovers, not without the hope of forgetting, for a spell at least, the fact that we are apt to get just about the theatre we deserve. Such a conference was no doubt an excellent scheme, a salutary getting of cards on the table, and mutual ventilations. There is space here merely for indications, a brief list, half flashes; but a congress might be a good thing that undertook some of the season's bright spots, picking them out and showing in each something of what could be fed upon, or delighted in.

The great peak in the whole season was Mme. Pauly's Electra, in the Strauss work, which though presented as if in a mere concert, of orchestra and singers, was brought through her great rendering into acted opera and so theatre, the most profound and stirring theatre that we have seen since the days of Chaliapin's earlier Boris and of Mei Lanfang. When the moment came where Electra recognizes Orestes, it was hard to believe that the Greek theatre, for all its galaxy and habit of "recognition scenes," ever reached what was here reached. For the music of our modern world and orchestra provided the scope necessary to the full Greek drama; and the realism possible to the modern artist, and in Mme. Pauly's art so great, gave the intensity and utmost belief. I have never before felt so strongly the sense of the sea, with all its movement, countermovement and expanse, within a scene. It knocked the Metropolitan Opera's season into a cocked hat; and for our theatre was a mine of truth and suggestion. Let the Hamlets, Richards, Othellos, Malay princesses, the actors of Strindberg, Eugene O'Neill and Russian drama, and let the playwrights both poetic or realistic of any intensity, think long over this "Elektra" occasion at Carnegie Hall.

There were beautiful moments not to be forgotten in Mr. Gielgud's Hamlet, especially in the earlier scenes, where power and a sustained movement of thought and feeling are not demanded, and here and there in his reading of the lyric or reflective lines. The very last moment in Mr. Howard's Hamlet, with the magnificent use of the banners, was, largely through Mr. Stewart Cheney's décor, very fine.

Mr. Walter Huston's Othello, in a production and a performance that many whose hopes had been high found generally disappointing, presented, nevertheless, some readings that remain with me as highly impressive. For I know the difficulties in them, and what their requirements are as to pressure and continuity, what exactions on the breath control they make, and with what subtlety the force of eloquence must be kept inside them if they are to yield their proper sense. No evasions of the meter, no muffings, no chopping up into links, no ejection of saliva beads, will work here. What Mr. Huston did with the reading, strictly as such, was by no means justly appreciated. And then also by one of those theatre ironies, there fell suddenly on my ear, listening to the first act of Maxwell Anderson's "High Tor," three or four lines, perhaps half a dozen (Mr. Byron McGrath's Captain Asher), in which there was the right solution, the pattern, urgency and unit of the verse. The effect was strangely startling, and left one thinking on what the true nature and use is of verse on the stage.

Mr. Russell Collins gave a performance of Paul Green's character of Johnny Johnson that by general consent was moving and remarkable. I should add too that it quite dilated and made more poignant and lovely the sketch, not incapable of banality, that the dramatist had provided. Mr. Collins created a gentle, varied and tragic fable, all the rarer for its sound and solid technical base.

The production of Marlowe's famous play of "The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus," a Federal Theatre Project, under the direction of Mr. Orson Welles, very notable for all save the puppets, which I should have left out, afforded what seemed to me the finest contrivance on our stage last season. I mean "the face that launched a thousand ships" scene, in which Mr. Welles by a brilliant invention had Faustus not at the back of the stage near Helen but there at the front right, looking out away from her. It gave a curious immortal quality to the fine recitation.

Miss Katherine Cornell's last scene in "Candida" will not fade from the memory, it was not only acting skill that pinned it, but even more some sort of gracious human wisdom and stage incandescence.

I revisited "Boy Meets Girl," that happy invention in stage story and true Americana, running over from former seasons; and I saw again the amount of intelligence that went into Mr. Abbott's shaping up of the casting, perform-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ances and production, and saw again Miss Joyce Arling's performance, fragile, accurate, shy, outrageously expert.

And, on another tack, I must record that when I went to see "Idiot's Delight" again, after it had played all season, I found one of the most heartening things that can happen in the theatre—and it happens, I fear, less and less often. It is rarely enough that after a run of some time a company's performance has been kept up to snuff. Here the company's playing was intact at every point. Mr. Lunt had eased and simplified his capital performance of that head of the vaudeville team; and Miss Fontanne, whose role at the start took every proficiency she knew to get it over at all, and none too definitely at that, had worked it through inch by inch, filling out the lines themselves and bringing the whole into some degree of convincing character for the woman and real emotional content for the play. This occasion was the outstanding instance I saw last season of the professional spirit in the best sense. STARK YOUNG.

From the Original French

THE French film production of Gorky's "Lower Depths" should help nobly in taking away the taste of all the clumsy pretentious miles of celluloid that have been coming in from abroad these last years (with isolated exceptions, of course). The quality of the print, development, camera equipment and lighting will still take you back ten years or so, but the main power of this film makes it one of the grand ones.

Jean Renoir's version is no landmark in the technique of handling film stories. It is a case where the material is so terrific, the cast so naturally wide of capability, that the severest demand on the producer must be that of holding onto what is there, and not botching. For to be anything besides exotic slummery or Marie Dressler in "Min and Bill," the swift fantastic turns of a story like this must be held to their solid background; and to be more than picturesque the background itself must reach beyond atmosphere and the life-types natural to it, into implications of some governing moral. In shifting the story to get the tighter continuity necessary in pictures, they have also shifted the moral axes. The vise of environment is still an iron one but the glimmer of redemption through love is made to play on love as an individual affair; the loving-kindness expressed by Luka is removed to the background. The man and the girl get clear in the end, and the characters almost inevitably have more freshness and charm than a Gorky original. But the relief an audience may feel over one case of deliverance is just one more token of its participation in the tragic hopelessness of life on those levels. And in general the play is served well, sense being read into the senseless topsy-turvy world of creatures that once were men without the nonsense that would lie in either overplaying its tragedy or making the tragedy suddenly all better.

But take the moral however you will, and in whatever sequence of scenes, Gorky's magnificent talent for absorbing life and for dramatic violence will be just so many words in a theatre sense until the actual place is fixed and actual people set moving in it. In the conception and building of sets I can't think of a picture more successful than this. The gray, tumbledown general outlines of squalor are fairly easy: the real test of genius is in the delicate obtrusion of one out of the thousands of mean and unobtrusive details that swarm in such a culture by the millions, their mass giving it these characteristics of sluggishness and thick odor and refraction of all light. The rug in a room, as seen through an off-center door, properly laid and the hole in it visible only by scuffed-up edges, but in its lack of any life and pattern the suggestion of a musty smell. The axle-and-wheels thing in an angle of the court, so natural to that place and inscrutable as to its original purpose that it might have been moldering there half a lifetime. The junk in the kitchen, a useless profusion yet out of the way of household activities; the ironware mess of the pantry mostly cut off by the angle of the door. And any chance view of the court, the general dormitory, the rooms of the house, does not reveal the artificially shaky and decaying but only an original cheapness of joining and materials that has been worn smooth and chinked with filth until it is a monument to cheapness, native and timeless. The camera never has to focus on lice and waterbugs and roaches, for this woodwork is the official hotel of their obscene national convention.

In creative background I am sure the Frenchmen stand first. Both the Germans and the Russians have done beautiful things, but in Germany there has always been a national tendency toward stylization and kraut, and the Soviet artists have known all along that in registering Bad Smell anything less than four close-up angles on a dungheap is escapism and betrayal of the worker. Hollywood has played along and incorporated everything, often with a fine perception of the flawed excesses of the original, usually with the increased facilities of its millions and superb technicians, but always with too much awe for the general design and art lay-out, or too many absolutely authentic items photographed under too much high light. The British have followed every lead hopefully, but usually in the wrong suit.

But you can never truly separate a stage setting from the costuming and carriage of the people moving across it; and surely Vladimir Sokolov as the pious fence is no less suggestively indigenous than the bugs in the ticking. The narrow hairy face, the bodily suggestion of scuttling in fear and creeping up with venom. Repulsive, subhuman, fascinating; the spider. All this comes through and adds immeasurably, though there can hardly be any doubt that Sokolov is a character actor with a part, which he milks in the best tradition (incidentally, the best tradition is being dealt a rather low blow in the movies, where situation is subordinate to continuity and where even the highest-class chewing of scenery cannot be tolerated because the scenery, like everything else, is vital in the total effect). Louis Jouvet (the Baron) makes a fine study of his part, for he is among the blessed of histrionic types—an arresting awkward figure, infinitely capable of shaping all odd motions into a grotesque central dignity that becomes beautiful as it mounts —from the goggling eye, the elevation and slow arc of the chin, the splayed walk or antic gestures in repose—until the mere figure as of the story is overshadowed by the complexity and premonition of the figure itself. Less prominent but more essential to the film's texture is Jean Gabin, the hardened picklock and lover in spite of himself. He has a fine strong head for the role and a trick of suggesting strength behind silence, sense and passion behind a guarded calm. This person or that incident may bulge in your mind

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

afterwards, but you may be sure that as the story was being released through the camera, the main cohesive was the part played by Jean Gabin, who gave no less and asked no more than the role stipulated. The girls Junie Astor and Jany Holt and Suzy Prim were about what women under those circumstances should be, and indeed the sister who loved Pepel was as much a rose among natural thorns as anyone could wish. It is the natural presence of these people, in this natural solid picturing of one of the world's most exciting pieces of dramatic creation, that sets this film above the general film level for eminence and power—without the director's ever showing a flash of the genius in the form peculiar to (*e. g.*) Capra, Clair, Ford, Milestone, Lubitsch, Lang, Pudovkin. It would seem that merely to sense what is enough, even in pictures, can be enough.

"Mayerling" (also from France) is another good film, but unreal even in pictures, where romance is so long and the facts of life so brief. The Archduke Rudolph is curbed and spied upon by the guardians of The State, which supposedly he personifies. If he finds pleasure in liberal-intellectual company, then pouf, the company is disposed of; if he falls in love, why nonsense, union can only be with some titled battle-ax, all reasons of state and no fun. If he gets out of line anywhere, they begin to rattle the royal chains, and the only thing he can do which won't be unseemly of a royal heir is go drinking and whoring around the capital, which he does. The problem is Charles Boyer's; the blaze of light in his somber life is Danielle Darrieux (a new lovely for screen parts); and so the thing is almost near and real as it is being acted out against its impeccable mounting. I can't remember when romance was more romancy, as a matter of fact, or hearts more true—but haven't we been through this proxied trouble before? And didn't we decide there was little to do but wring our hands and try to forget? Is it possible that even in the never-never land of movies we have come to demand that we be enlisted in struggles more closely allied to today or to the eternal fate of the race?

The "Prisoner of Zenda" is another thing again: it has the youth of royalty, to be sure, but its adventure is more outward and more ingeniously worked out through blades and black villains, moats, swordplay, escapes and a young Englishman with a heart to lose. Certainly it is one of the best things in its class. They throw in everything but the War of the Roses and elephants, and if you were to question the producers on the probability of any one scene they would take you for someone from the Department of Internal Revenue; yet once the story is accepted, you can see how they have worked at it with sincerity and scrupulous care, treating its hokum almost with dignity. Ronald Colman in the main double role is one reason why the scenes are built into credibility; and Madeleine Carroll as Flavia is another reason, though it is unfortunate that anyone so lovely should occasionally suggest Ann Harding; Douglas Fairbanks Jr. makes a good ornamental rogue; and C. Aubrey Smith is there for background. (Raymond Massey, if I were running the show, would speak all his lines with his back to the camera, through an interpreter.) So the young king is saved from himself and his brother, love is renounced and the national welfare invoked, and Zenda lives again, if any.

OTIS FERGUSON.

The Bandwagon

The Japanese do not admit that any of their planes were bombing the Tazang vicinity yesterday, but they conceded that Chinese planes would not have been bombing their own areas.—*Hallett Abend, in a cabled dispatch to The New York Times.*

Whatever people may say, it is extraordinarily difficult to drive out of the worker's head the conviction that he is exploited by the capitalist.—*Popolo delli Api, quoted in The London Daily Worker.*

The National Socialist Labor Front, to which every German worker is virtually compelled to belong, has expelled a worker here because he threw a sausage from a window. The worker argued that as it was his sausage he could do what he pleased with it.

The Labor Front ruled, however, that he had been disloyal "to the unity of the German people."—*Special cable to The New York Times from Berlin.*

Chief Black Hawk, a full-blooded Powhatan Indian, was dropped from the WPA during a drive on "aliens." The chief, known as Robert H. Clark, was teaching archery and Indian arts and crafts to children.—*United Press dispatch from Fall River, Mass., quoted in The Mobile Press-Register.*

DON'T BREAK THE NEWS TO MOTHER

Commemorating the signing of the Kellogg-Briand peace pact, government officials in Paris and Washington will unite in praise of the international agreement to outlaw war during a broadcast tonight at 5:30 o'clock.—*Item in the radio column of The Peoria, Ill., Star.*

NEW YORK TIMES OUT OF MIND

It is difficult for readers today to realize there once was a time when the reviewer's estimate of an author was governed, not by the quality of his work but by his political opinions.—*Percy Hutchinson in The New York Times Book Review Section.*

GELDING THE LILY

When I went to see "Sanders of the River" and "Wings Over Africa," the black women hardly wore anything. Now, I don't think that is right; after all, they are human the same as we, and just because they happen to be black it does not mean that they do not have to wear anything.

It may be their own way in their own country, but at least they ought to put something on them when taking part in a film.

Also it is not very nice if you have a brother or boy-friend sitting next to you.—*Letter in Picturegoer (London), quoted in The New Statesman.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column and $1 will be paid for each item used. Address The Bandwagon, care of The New Republic.—THE EDITORS.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

Law and Order in Wisconsin

SIR: The news paragraph in your issue of August 11 on the action of the Wisconsin state labor-disputes board in proceeding against the Fort Atkinson Law and Order League should be brought up to date. As the board's hearing into charges against the League and the Creamery Package Manufacturing Company progressed, embarrassing testimony emerged about anti-labor activities of the company and the League. In this atmosphere, the board recessed hearings, called a conference of all principals, and wangled a settlement under which the company backtracked, and recognized the striking CIO Automobile Workers' Union as sole bargaining agent. The board then dismissed charges against both the League and the company. The League, quite discredited, will probably soon "fold up."

Milwaukee, Wis. RUBEN LEVIN.

Gone with the Ago

SIR: Ordinarily, I read your excellent magazine from cover to excellent cover, but early in the issue of August 25 I got caught in a trap that I'm still not quite clear of. It was the first sentence of your editorial on Sacco and Vanzetti that caused the trouble: "It is ten years ago next week since . . . etc." you said; and it is now next week (or maybe it will be ten years), but since ago is gone since ten (does that make it twenty?) years—well, you can see the confusion your switch to D.S.T. (Decade Saving Time) has gotten me into.

Gaylordsville, Conn. ROBERT M. COATES.

An American Looks at Germany

SIR: I think your readers may like to see the quotations below from a letter recently received. The author is an American who has been spending some time in Germany.

New York City. C. D.

[ENCLOSURE]

Oddly, perhaps, we liked Germany and Germans better than Hungary and Hungarians, though I execrate the regime and frequently, and perhaps unreasonably, blame all Germans for concurrence, active or passive, in that regime. Further, I am pretty firmly convinced that the Germans are inherently a warlike people; but how can one help that something warm that rises up inside one, in spite of merit or demerit? . . .

The people, while denying emphatically that there will be a war, live in tense expectation of it. The majority of the women, and some of the men, deplore it as an evil, or at least undesirable. A great many, tragically enough, despite whatever their lips may say, betray a sort of joyous excitement at the thought: They may be praising American motor cars, or English wool, and then will come the cry, and literally it is a battle-cry: "But the German soldier is the best on earth!" . . . One of their slogans is: "Our colonies!" They mistrust and do not like Italy. "She betrayed us once," they say. There is a great attempt to popularize the Japanese, and it seems to be catching on. Sometimes there is, I suspect, a faint bit of malice when they describe to me, as an American, the benefits that Germany will reap from this alliance. I politely pointed out to them that the Japanese are not Nordics. And that, they will admit, is unfortunate. . . .

Tragically enough, I fear that Hitler, personally, is more popular than I believed. To be sure, a great many will give lip-service to him from various motives, whether lukewarm or actually antipathetic; likewise those who might wish to express antagonistic views, dare not, so what I heard cannot of course be taken as too accurate a "vox pop." Still—I have seen the light of the devotee in the eyes of at least one adult when speaking of him, and have heard several praise him warmly. Why? They have food. They have work. He has restored the army. He has restored order. He tweaks the ear of their ancient enemy, France. He is a simple man who sups on an apple and a piece of bread. (At least publicly.) He doesn't bother with women. . . .

I saw the man twice in Nuremburg, stood just across the street from his hotel, and watched him get into his automobile. There is little formality and no apparent heavy guard. I believe that anyone who wants to get Hitler can do so. Why someone has not already done so, remains a mystery. And whether it would do any good if they did, I cannot even guess. . . .

From The New Republic Mailbag

George Clifton Edwards, 1905 Commerce Street, Dallas, Texas, describes an attack made by anti-union hoodlums in Dallas who destroyed some $700 worth of sound and motion-picture equipment being used for a showing of the film, "Millions of Us," in a public park. Herbert Harris, in charge of the showing, was kidnaped, beaten, tarred and feathered by the hoodlums. The experiment of using outdoor movies to foster union organization, believed the first large-scale project of this kind, had been producing remarkably good results in various cities in Texas. Mr. Edwards hopes sympathetic persons will send contributions in order that the equipment may be replaced and the work resumed.

A reader in New Orleans tells us that the Louisiana League for Preservation of Constitutional Rights is rallying to the defense of Henry Hermes, executive secretary of the Socialist Party, who wrote and sold a pamphlet denouncing corruption in the state and municipal governments and was arrested under a wartime emergency act for "attempting to incite a riot by distributing slanderous literature."

Margaret W. Stewart, of Washington, D. C., says that reactionaries are always howling about the excessive cost, in taxes, of such things as social-security legislation but they seldom complain about such laws as those of Frederick, Maryland, and Durant, Mississippi, which levy extra and direct taxes for the specific purpose of making contributions to local chambers of commerce. . . . Mrs. Jean Milholland, Westport, New York, says she will appreciate it if any persons having letters or other writings of Inez Milholland will communicate with her.

What's on the Air?

Dr. Francis Carter Wood, of the United States, and leading experts from European countries participate in a round-table discussion of the problem of cancer at the International Congress on Radiology. Tuesday, September 14, 5:45 to 6 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

The nationwide celebration of the one-hundred-fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Constitution brings several figures to the microphone during the week. Senator Borah of Idaho is heard Thursday, September 16, 10 to 10:45 P.M., NBC-Blue Network; Senator Vandenberg of Michigan, Friday, September 17, 2 to 2:45 P.M., NBC-Red Network; Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace, Friday, September 17, 9:30 to 10 P.M., NBC-Blue Network; and President Roosevelt is heard on both the Columbia and the NBC-Blue Networks from 10:30 to 11 P.M., September 17.

A sampling of the "Class of 1941" is made by interviewing new students at Northwestern University about their plans, political views, reasons for going to college, etc. Thursday, September 16, 4:15 P.M., CBS.

Samuel Seabury, noted jurist and civic reformer of New York City, gives his views on "Fighting Crime." Saturday, September 18, 6:45 P.M., CBS.

Musical events of the week include John Charles Thomas, baritone, as soloist with a symphony orchestra directed by Jose Iturbi, Sunday, September 12, 9 to 10 P.M., CBS; and Gina Cigna, soprano, in an international rebroadcast from Rome of a portion of Verdi's opera, "Don Carlos," Tuesday, September 14, 4 to 4:30 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

All times given are Eastern Daylight Saving Time.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Constitution in Cotton Wool

MR. McLAUGHLIN'S work,[1] bearing the title, "A Constitutional History of the United States," embraces 792 pages of text, divided into 51 chapters. In this apportionment of selection and emphasis, 693 pages are allotted to the long period from colonial origins to the end of the "reconstruction" which closed the Civil War, and about a hundred pages cover the period from approximately 1876 to approximately 1914, with brief references to the later amendments. The account of the federal convention of 1787 begins on page 148. After the account of the framing and adoption of the Constitution and the establishment of the new government, come chapters under headings long familiar in our professional political history, such as the Alien and Sedition Acts, the annexation of Louisiana, the War of 1812, the Missouri Compromise, Jackson and the Bank, the compromise of 1850, the Dred Scott case, the Lincoln-Douglas debates, civil war and reconstruction. To these staples are added chapters on the Supreme Court under Marshall and Taney, which are usually omitted or minimized in records purely political.

For the general framework which he has chosen to set up, Mr. McLaughlin has selected his materials from among the thousands of pages of facts available, has arranged them in accordance with his conception of emphasis, and has made running comments which he deems appropriate. This is what every historian does, even when he pretends to be describing historical occurrences as they actually were. In respect of the matters he chooses to treat, Mr. McLaughlin makes use of first-hand documents or scholarly works of the highest standing in the field of professional historiography. He says in his preface that he has not tried to write a long and learned work for technical students, but to "include essentials and these alone, to discuss those matters which in my own judgment the American citizen, not highly trained in law, should know familiarly." His style is dignified, sometimes austere, and carries the air of impartiality. In other words, it conforms to those linguistic requirements long cherished and supposed to be "objective" or "scientific" by one school of professional historians in the United States.

Yet a microscopic examination of the statements which Mr. McLaughlin chooses to include or to make, and of the manner of making, reveals his frame of reference for selection, exclusion and emphasis. His frame of reference, it seems to me, can be most accurately characterized by the statement that it conforms to the Federalist-Whig-Republican tradition, with perhaps a touch of Cleveland Democracy. That is a great tradition. I was brought up in it myself and did not discover that any other tradition was possible until I reached early manhood. This is not to say that Mr. McLaughlin is crassly or subtly partisan, but that he has not applied the clarifying Socratic *elenchus* to his own conceptions.

This generalization may be illustrated by a few examples of things Mr. McLaughlin chooses to exclude, or at least minimize, in the direction of disappearance. Let us first take the question of the powers conferred upon the government of the United States by the Constitution. Surely that is an important point for the citizen today. Mr. McLaughlin dismisses it with two or three pages, which are misleading in language and implication. He says: "The assignment of explicitly enumerated powers was first worked out not in open convention but by the committee of detail." This is both misleading and incomplete. In the first place the Constitution nowhere refers to "explicitly enumerated powers." In the convention Madison distinctly repudiated the idea, and he again repudiated it when the Tenth Amendment was under debate in Congress. So much for misleading. In the second place, the convention did adopt for the guidance of the committee of detail a broad and sweeping resolution providing that on the subject of the powers

> the legislature of the United States ought to possess the legislative rights vested in Congress by the Confederation; and moreover to legislate in all cases for the general interests of the Union and also in those cases to which the states are separately incompetent, or in which the harmony of the United States may be interrupted by the exercise of individual legislation.

And after the committee of detail worked out a statement of powers, the convention added the "general-welfare clause," which Mr. McLaughlin apparently regards as insignificant, and Mr. James Francis Lawton deems worth a whole volume ("The General Welfare Clause," Washington, 1934).

To cite another example of Mr. McLaughlin's omissions or minimizations, he does not choose to give four or five pages to the charge, brought by Seward and Lincoln, to the effect that President Buchanan entered into secret correspondence with members of the Supreme Court and helped to "fix up" the Dred Scott decision; nor does he choose to emphasize Mr. Justice McLean's presidential ambitions in that connection. He does, it is true, give part of a page to the Buchanan correspondence, and says that judged by present standards it "appears highly improper." In my opinion an effort to present "the truth of the Dred Scott case" would include a fuller exploration of the political circumstances in which the decision was formulated. In my opinion this should be done, if the purpose of a history is to make the ordinary citizen aware of the methods and processes by which constitutional decisions have been reached.

Take another illustration, the Fourteenth Amendment. On page 656 Mr. McLaughlin deals with the formulation of that amendment and glides lightly over the special significance of the due-process clause. Now Mr. McLaughlin is well aware that Negroes got little out of it and that corporations got their full meed, but he does not choose to explore the operations and intentions of the leading men who drew and inserted that clause. Materials were available to him; for example, the speeches and statements of John A. Bingham and Roscoe Conkling. Bingham claimed that he wrote the clause and later made a speech in the House of Representatives expounding his reasons. As a railroad lawyer arguing a case before the Supreme Court, Conkling expounded the corporation end of the argument

[1] A Constitutional History of the United States, by Andrew C. McLaughlin. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 833 pages. $5.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

("Rise of American Civilization," II, pp. 112-114). If the purpose of a written history is to make the average citizen familiar with the way in which constitutional amendments have been drawn and adopted, then Mr. McLaughlin owes his readers a fuller exploration of the origins of the Fourteenth Amendment than he has made. In my way of thinking a few pages could be well cut from colonial origins to make room for this significant exposition. So much for illustrations of things Mr. McLaughlin has chosen to omit or treat too lightly.

Now let us take an illustration or two of the comments he has chosen to make himself on his materials. The men who championed the Constitution while its adoption was pending are treated with warm and sympathetic consideration. They displayed "patience, wisdom and skill." Hamilton and Madison are praised for "masterly management and skillful argument." "Wilson's defense of the Constitution was very able." And what does Mr. McLaughlin have to say for the other side? Not much. "Many foolish and extravagant attacks appeared in the newspapers," for instance. If the business of the historian is to be as objective as he can, then he should eschew praising and condemning, and confine himself to statements of things said and done on both sides.

A second illustration of the kind of comments Mr. McLaughlin has chosen to make may be taken from his treatment of the Legal Tender cases. He says (page 693): "The President [Grant] was said to have deliberately 'packed' the Court. There appears to be no substantial ground for this charge." Look at the words: no "substantial" ground. A historical negative is usually hard to prove. If there are any grounds, why not state them? If the thing cannot be proved one way or the other, why give an impression that it is practically settled one way?

Mr. McLaughlin's method is in the tradition of our professional and amateur historians such as Rhodes, Burgess and Charles Warren. In his early editions, Rhodes faced Seward's charge that the Dred Scott case was cooked up by politicians, and dismissed the charge as unproved. Burgess dismissed the charge with the comment that "Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Taney were men of the highest personal and official character and possessed the most delicate sense of the requirements and proprieties of the great stations which they occupied. It is almost certain that the charge was an unfounded suspicion." Well, in the light of evidence later made available, such comments appear irrelevant to the exposition. In any case they were irrelevant interjections of the historians' personal sentiments and prejudices.

Now it is the Legal Tender business that is on the carpet. Since Mr. McLaughlin penned his page and made his irrelevant comment, Mr. Sidney Ratner has disposed of the pleasing fiction that Grant appointed the new Justices, Bradley and Strong, without pointed reference to the reversal of the first Legal Tender decision (Political Science Quarterly, September, 1935, pp. 343-358). Mr. McLaughlin was premature in making an assumption unwarranted by any facts available to him.

I choose another illustration of the kind of comments Mr. McLaughlin chooses to make. Speaking of the charge that Grant packed the Court, Mr. McLaughlin says:

> It brings to our attention the ease with which the Court can be altered by a President determined to have his way if a majority of the Senate be with him. And one is tempted to say in addition, that, if Grant had taken that step for the express purpose of bending the Court to his will, it would have been only an extreme and peculiarly obnoxious example of a practice indulged in, when nominations of judges are under consideration in the Senate. For in those discussions we find many examples of opposition or advocacy, based not upon the character and learning of the person proposed for the Bench, but upon the nature of his decisions in a lower court or upon his supposed attitude of mind toward especially significant policies. . . . The present writer is not prepared to deny that circumstances may arise when the composition of the Court and the effect of a particular appointment to its membership may properly be taken into consideration. At all events, such considerations are certain to have weight.

Let us look at these words. It is "obnoxious" for Senators to consider anything except the "character and learning" of nominees to the Supreme Bench. Obnoxious to whom and why? If Mr. McLaughlin were in the Senate and a President nominated to the Bench socialists of high character and great learning (assuming that possible), would he consider only character and learning or would he consider the things that the nominees might do to the Constitution? Senators have taken an oath to support the Constitution and some of them know as much about it as a former Senator now on the Supreme Bench. Are they not bound by oath as well as honor to scrutinize all the qualifications and propensities of nominees to the Bench presented to them? Would any President propose or any Senate confirm a candidate for the Bench who was known to be opposed on constitutional grounds to the great policies which the President or Senate espouse and honestly believe to be constitutional? To suppose otherwise would be to suppose a myth. As Mr. McLaughlin himself says, "such considerations are certain to have weight." If so, why should a historian preach a sermon against a practice that prevails? Is that calculated to make the average citizen familiar with things he ought to know about the constitutional history of the United States? In my opinion, it is not.

Mr. McLaughlin explains the brief and cursory manner in which he outlines our constitutional history since about 1876 by referring to the difficulties of dealing with it "objectively" and to the fact that contemporary constitutional decisions are often discussed in connection with problems arising in the more distant past to which he gives nearly all his space. His justification has elements of weight; but certainly it is possible for trained minds to analyze decisions of the Supreme Court, arguments of counsel and constitutional debates in Congress since 1876, without "forcing unduly our prejudices upon the reader," as Mr. McLaughlin puts it—at least any more unduly than he has done in dealing with the most distant phases of our constitutional development. With all due respect to the scholarship and learning of Mr. McLaughlin, I am of the opinion that the citizen whom he has in mind would be no more prejudiced by the 306 pages of Thomas Reed Powell's "The Supreme Court and State Police Power, 1922-1930," than by Mr. McLaughlin's account of the formation and adoption of the Constitution.

Space forbids more, but I may add that there is scarcely a chapter in Mr. McLaughlin's work which is not open to objections such as are here presented. On the face of things it is not "A Constitutional History of the United States." It is Mr. McLaughlin's selection of materials and comments down to about 1876, with a brief and cursory appendix. It is not calculated to encourage the average citizen to apply any engines of criticism and verification to constitutional issues, but rather to confirm him in those easy conceptions which run current in that comfortable portion of American society which imagines itself to be all of society. It does not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

illuminate our scene, but tends to confuse and darken it. This opinion I express without any reference to the controversy now raging among scholars over the nature, possibilities and limitations of historiography. My judgment is founded on the conviction that upon the kind of history written depends in a measure the outcome of a larger issue: our ability, through the use of the widest possible realistic knowledge and the use of the Socratic method, to resolve our economico-constitutional conflicts in the forum of free discussion. Surely that is no light matter.

CHARLES A. BEARD.

Gibbon as a Work of Art

Edward Gibbon: 1737-1794, by D. M. Low. New York: Random House. 384 pages. $3.50.

GIBBON'S bicentenary is well timed. It finds his reputation comfortably ascending the crest of its second wave, leaving behind it the trough of contempt and irritation to which the nineteenth century consigned almost everything about him—his historical bias and his style, his notorious chapters on Christianity and his politics, his love affairs and that "most singular spectacle in physiognomy," his face itself. While a new age of skepticism and synthesis welcomes his destructive force, a new psychology admires the droll Olympian who won both the raillery and adoration of his age; who sighed as a lover, obeyed as a son, and thus released Suzanne Curchod to become the mother of Mme. de Staël; who found his mistress in "Fanny Lausanne," his spouse in the Roman Empire, and eventually triumphed in the single infatuation of his life—a conquest which only Suzanne could express with the proper wisdom and irony: *"Vous êtes marié avec la gloire."*

However much "The Decline and Fall" may still be disputed by theorists, rebuked by believers or amended by scholars, there is no question of its position in modern historiography or its supremacy as a work of art. Now its author has become a work of art too. Strachey praises his life as a perfect example of the felicity of accidents and the pursuit of rational happiness. G. M. Young pictures Gibbon's career as an ideal collaboration between antiquity and modernity. And Mr. Low suggests the source of his admiration when he defines our revived interest in "The Decline and Fall" as attributable to "the passing of the grand manner from contemporary letters. We admire the bow which we do not presume to draw, and which is no longer made contemptible in the hands of vulgar suitors." Whatever makes Gibbon absurd, vainglorious or futile as a man is excused by the sublime confidence of his ambition, his complacent recognition of personal shortcomings and the lofty dignity of his conduct. When he wrote his autobiography he almost justified the gibe of mistaking himself for the Roman Empire, and made that classic of understatement so effective a reproof to "biographical ferrets" that he has had to wait a century and a half for his first-full-length portrait.

What he actually gave his admirers was a perfect diagram for their delvings. Mr. Low (who has already edited the "Journals" and should now complete his triptych by editing the letters) knows too many facts to miss the cues in Gibbon's memoirs. He forces no psychological or spiritual crises, for he doubtless believes that Gibbon was incapable of them. He is adroit enough to see that what Gibbon left superbly untold can be filled in better by documentary suggestion than by belaboring a case history of eccentric psychology whose mysteries are rudimentary and whose failings need mystify us no longer. His excellent scholarship offers two obstacles to distinction. Its style is lively and humorous but at the risk of flightiness and at the cost of clarity, and it makes too little integration of biographical and critical treatment.

In two chapters he undertakes a judgment of Gibbon's place in history and literature, and tempers his reverence with several qualifications, but they remain only a sketch of a necessary project. Of Gibbon's excess of reactionary skepticism, the illusory detachment of his method, his obtuseness to the complexity or spirituality of the forces in which he dealt, we get only passing admissions. When we read that "Gibbon was neither a propagandist nor a preacher. . . . He had nothing to prove," we know that his gaminess is accepted too much at its face value. Mr. Low suggests a more exact basis of evaluation when he claims that Gibbon believed always in "the stability of human nature" and "the part which accident plays in history," and especially when he says that "by pinning his faith to one standard, Gibbon becomes at times as much involved in the consequent notion of degeneration as some modern optimists have been in the idea of progress." The felicities of Gibbon's career were, too often, those of the negative virtues: he was a skeptic in his beliefs, a celibate in his friendships, a time-server in Parliament, an imitator in esthetics, and inevitably, in his masterpiece, the chronicler of a decline and fall. Yet that monument laid the foundations of a new scholarship, a new historical science and a new approach to the past, and its author accordingly made an irresistible Colossus of himself by bestriding the worlds of ancient and modern learning. His place in literature is not merely secure, it is unique; and Mr. Low makes us believe the same of his character, his industry and his wit.

MORTON DAUWEN ZABEL.

Jowett's Plato

The Dialogues of Plato: The Unabridged Translation by Benjamin Jowett. New York: Random House. 2 vols., 1,922 pages. $5.

CONTRARY to misleading statements on the jackets of some recent cheap volumes of selections and reprints from Plato's dialogues, this is the first complete edition of Jowett's translation to be offered at less than twenty-five dollars.

The reduction of the older four-and-five-volume editions to two sturdy volumes has been accomplished, apart from the use of lighter paper, by the omission of Jowett's long and numerous introductions and analyses. The type is larger and easier to read than in the third edition of 1892, and all marginal notes and the index have been retained. The omission of the introductions will be a loss to few and an advantage to many. The critical reader of Plato does not need them, and the general reader who would be content with someone else's summary of such dialogues as the "Phaedrus" and the "Republic" has no business with Plato anyhow. Jowett's comments on Plato's philosophy looked from the vantage point of mid-nineteenth-century evolutionism; where there was combined an amazing amount of misinformation in biology, a Hegelian condescension toward the cultural disadvantages of the remote past and a generous supply of Oxonian self-complacency. For instance, Jowett discovered that a fatal flaw in Plato's scheme for communizing the family was that "nature" had protested so strongly against tampering with that institution that nine-tenths of children cared for by nurses as substitutes for mothers were doomed to perish in infancy. When brought

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

up by their mothers, it was a "subtle sympathy" that kept them going. If, as has been said, half the world's delusions can be found in the "Republic," the other half can be found in Jowett's introductions.

Jowett's translation, however, is another matter. All things considered, it is sufficiently literal to avoid the reading in of distorting interpretations, and it uses sufficient liberty of expression to render it an intelligible version of Plato's thought. There are other translations of individual dialogues which are preferable to Jowett's; some because of greater accuracy, others because of a more noble style. Shelley's translation of the "Symposium," for example, while it might not satisfy the meticulous as a transcription, is a masterpiece of English prose and is certainly not a distortion of Plato. However, for a complete version of Plato, for sustained consistency over a wide range of topics, and for clear and unpretentious style, Benjamin Jowett remains the best.

Professor Demos has written an introduction which, although only five pages long, is a model of concise and definitive summation of Plato's conclusions and method. Here is a sample of characteristic concentration: "Reason is a way of knowledge; it is also a way of conduct. Reason is power; to know is to do; virtue is knowledge; thus, the good life is the reasonable life." Plato himself would like to have said that.

JESSE V. MAUZEY.

Angles on Spain

The Siege of Alcazar, by Major Geoffrey McNeill-Moss. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 337 pages. $3.50.

Single to Spain, by Keith Scott Watson. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 264 pages. $2.

THE SIEGE OF ALCAZAR" (*sic,* although the definite article is everywhere employed in the text proper) is a narrative of the seventy-days' defense of that historic citadel in Toledo, from its investment at the outbreak of hostilities (July 19, 1936) to its relief by the troops of Franco on September 27. The story is based on the diary kept by an officer of the garrison, and on a series of letters written, but never sent, by another besieged officer to his betrothed. Moreover, "the high command of the Spanish Nationalist army," the military authorities in Toledo, and various people (officers, men, and one lady) who endured the siege have also, the author tells us, lent their coöperation.

The day-to-day details of the siege afford interesting reading. The impression, however, cannot be avoided that the book would have been more successful had Major McNeill-Moss seen fit to stick strictly to his sources and avoid the forays and excursions that mar the unity of the narrative. The reader who cannot identify himself with the Fascist cause will find the author's lofty pretense of political impartiality excessively irritating; the truth of the matter is that his text is rank with partisan bias. His speech bewrayeth him in the lines of his preface, where he writes of the Loyalist besiegers: "They were in revolt against tradition, they despised established methods, so it is doubtful whether they kept records. If they did, it is unlikely that any will have survived." And thereafter the author is at some pains to make the Loyalists out as poor, ill educated, simple and brave, no doubt, but horribly misguided. This of the people whose poets in deliberate convention decided that they were obliged by their art to tell the story of the Civil War; of the poets who, by common consent, forsook their various modern literary tendencies to recreate and revitalize the *romancero,* the old Spanish ballad form hallowed by centuries. Throughout, Major McNeill-Moss refers to the conflict as one between the "Government" and the "Nationalists"; the terms *Rebel* or *Fascist* are practically never employed, or, if so, are put in quotes: whereas *Reds* or *Left Extremists* are mentioned frequently enough. The author gets around to a defense of this position: "As the supporters of General Franco's cause disliked the name of 'Rebels' or 'Insurgents,' and as the government in Madrid had preferred 'internationalism' to 'nationalism,' the forces of General Franco will be called, in chapters that follow this, 'the Nationalists.' " It does not seem to have occurred to the mind of the Major that the government in Madrid might dislike having its enemies known as Nationalists, or that their likes or dislikes might have any value; nor that, since they disliked the idea of monarchy or dictatorship, they might have some title to be called Republicans, or Democrats.

There can be no possibility, in so brief a notice, of exposing every prejudiced operation of the Major's mind; or of documenting, *exemplorum gratia,* his frequent habit of citing rumors only to deny them, with a fine show of judgment reserved, as "not proven." For this reviewer the high point of sheer gall was discovered on page 118—"There have been many proved atrocities committed by members of the *Frente Popular,* but there have been hardly any attributed to the Nationalists." Perhaps it is only fair to say that the final chapters of Major McNeill-Moss's book were written last February and that Almeria and Guernica came too late to afford him an opportunity to revise this sentence.

In addition to profuse illustration, the text contains an appendix describing the architectural history of the Alcazar; and another appendix calculated to disprove the allegation of Fascist massacres committed at Badajoz after its capture on August 14. Major McNeill-Moss cites no evidence to show that the population of Badajoz leaped into the bull-ring with the intention of committing mass suicide. It is possible, of course, that such was the case.

If the dominant quality of "The Siege of Alcazar" is obduracy, that of "Single to Spain" may be summed up, in a word, as callowness. The chief merit of Mr. Scott Watson's book is that the author makes no other pretense. He "kisses" and tells, resigns from the International Brigade because he is frankly too scared to suffer further fighting, and in general writes himself up in such a way as to create no undue prejudice in favor of his character. Moreover, if it is fair to judge on the basis of the lingo he puts into the mouth of an acquaintance who "was in de wobblies in de American seamen's union," scrupulous reportorial accuracy is neither his habit nor his pride. But some interesting material does percolate: the anarchic and amateurish mixture of confusion and enthusiasm in the war's early stages, particularly around Barcelona way, comes through adequately; and there is a pleasant little glimpse of Ralph Bates, "tall, stout, about forty, looking more like a master plumber than a revolutionary leader. . . . Just as our absent leader created distrust, so, with the same spontaneity, this ex-soldier, skilled artisan and revolutionary, whose novels were the finest on modern Spain, dispelled it." Neither profound nor searching, satisfied with recording the skittering aspects of the surface, Mr. Scott Watson, in spite of himself, permits the reader to sense, however vaguely, something of that fundamental and intrinsic dignity which has elevated Madrid from the status of a "meager market village," in the words of Major McNeill-Moss, to her present position of eminence as moral and spiritual capital of Western Europe.

ROLFE HUMPHRIES.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Chinese Puzzle

The Return of Kai Lung, by Ernest Bramah. New York: Sheridan House. $2.50.

AS PRECIOUS a lot of rascals as ever graced print, and enough flowery speech to supply the chancelleries of all the ancient worlds, are involved in this desperate mystery of the Mandarin T'sin Wong's missing pigtail. There was the Mandarin himself, who had raised abuse to a high art; his inscriber-of-words Chin-tung, an expert at appreciating abuse; the exile Kwan Yen, composer of public apologies; and his daughter Hwa-che, versed in the arts of Barbarian detection. To complicate the cast there are the assembled soothsayers of Kochow, the various rebel bands through whose lairs the heroine conducts her search—amid hair-raising adventures—and the venomous spirits with which China was infested in that day, and lastly the emperor himself. Knowing from the books that nothing can really harm a detector of crime after the Western fashion, and immune from evil spirits by her change to male attire—"Whereas heretofore scarcely a night passed without the fastening of this one's inner door being tried constantly by some intruding Spirit, unearthly words dropped into her ears in crowded places, and the embarrassing pressure as of familiar hands in the darkened courts . . . since she stained her face to a repulsive hue and adopted the uncouth garb and behavior of one of the other sort the infliction had wholly ceased"—Hwa-che serenely pursued the missing queue. Since it is unfair in detective stories to supply the solution, the inquisitive will have to read for themselves. Inquisitive or not, let them read. For this is as unimportant a piece of nonsensical spoofing and sustained lightness as has been released in many a day, with just enough barbed satire (but nicely swathed) to supply that occasional ease of conscience needed by the earnest. It is no Charlie Chan, with short cryptic sayings and unerring intuition, who conducts this search; the speeches are involved, verging, but just verging, on the tedious at times; the pace is slow and the pigtail is long.

B. E. BETTINGER.

Freud Self-Revised

The Problem of Anxiety, by Sigmund Freud. Translated by Henry Alden Bunker, M.D. Albany and New York: The Psychoanalytic Quarterly Press and W. W. Norton Company. 165 pages. $2.

THIS FIRST authorized translation into English of "Hemming, Symptom und Angst" emphasizes one of Freud's truly great characteristics—his ability to criticize his own early theories as forthrightly and dispassionately as he does those of Adler and Rank. After he had reached old age, after his "Collected Papers" had been published and his "Ego and the Id" accepted by most of his followers as the final word in psychoanalytic principles, he reëxamined his theory of anxiety and altered it radically. For more than thirty years he held that anxiety was an effective result, an emotional by-product, of the mechanism of repression. Now he sees anxiety, which he defines as a reaction against a psychologically dangerous situation, as the real motive force behind the repressive process itself. In this decision he appears to come close to accepting Rank's belief concerning the supreme power of the birth trauma. Actually though, he does not. He maintains more stoutly than ever that the truly important psychic experience of infancy is not the awful memory of birth but the childish terror of castration. And through his exposition of this initial castration-anxiety and its normal and abnormal developments, he is able to correlate the compulsion and conversion neuroses and the various phobias more closely than has been done before. Yet he admits honestly, and with apparent cheerfulness, that the problem of the ultimate source of the neuroses is still unsolved.

It is too bad that within recent years the Psychoanalytic Quarterly Press has got a corner on the serial rights, and thereby the translating prerogative, of all the works of European analysts now appearing in America. Whether for good or ill, Freud's theories have ceased to be the private property of a small clique of medical men and have come to be of vital interest to most educated people. And the non-medical reader is justified in demanding that his attention should not be distracted from the difficult task of comprehending Freud's thoughts by translations which lack not only grace but good grammar.

GRACE ADAMS.

The Ways of Error

The Story of Human Error, edited by Joseph Jastrow. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 452 pages. $3.50.

Adventures in Error, by Vilhjalmur Stefansson. New York: Robert M. McBride and Company. 299 pages. $3.

IN THE first of these two books Dr. Abraham Myerson, an American psychiatrist who should be more widely known than he is, puts into crystal-clear language what is probably the most significant single factor in the whole sad history of human error. Commenting on the narrow dogmatism of many psychiatrists, on their tendency to loose generalizations and invidious diagnoses suggestive of Lombroso's distorted approach, Myerson writes: "The principal error that has been made is to mistake social maladjustment as necessarily psychopathological." And in his plea for a more broadly based and socially conscious psychiatry, he concludes that "the economic structure with its competitiveness, with its burdens of the impress of fear, the sense of inferiority and failure, may, on examination, appear to be the important variable that compresses and depresses the individual."

Unfortunately Dr. Myerson's candor and realism are not matched by the remaining fifteen contributors to Dr. Jastrow's symposium. True, in the first three sections, dealing with the universe, the physical and biological sciences, we have a number of very able discourses by such authorities as H. T. Stetson (astronomy), W. F. G. Swann (physics), H. M. Parshley (zoölogy), and C. J. Herrick (neurophysiology). Each of these specialists shows how the irrational lias worked against the truth in his own subject, but few of them get much beyond the technical aspects of their particular brand of error.

Lacking though it is in the intellectual coherence which only a definite point of view can supply, Dr. Jastrow's volume is informative and often most stimulating: especially where the reader may disagree with one or another of the contributors. Certainly, it provides far more nourishment than Mr. Stefansson's rather sloppy and overwritten collection of travelers' tales (including Mencken's famous "bathtub hoax"). Perhaps it is important to disprove that wolves hunt in packs and that Greenland Eskimos live in snow houses, but to this reviewer it seems a clear case of "so what?"

HAROLD WARD.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sour Mash

Ferment, by John T. McIntyre. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

"FERMENT" is broader in scope and superior in more ways than one to John T. McIntyre's prize-winning "Steps Going Down." Mr. McIntyre previously devoted himself to investigating the personality of the "rat," reproducing him as a character, in his idiom, his habits and his special milieu. In "Ferment" the rat is lifted out of his underworld isolation and given social purpose and direction. His more degenerate qualities as a character function, in turn, to illuminate the threat of fascism, and he becomes more convincing, more ominous and symbolic as a contemporary figure.

The plot of "Ferment" is simple and conventional enough. It has love as its focal point, dictatorship as its panorama. Two brothers want the same girl. Tom is a cab driver, the treasurer of his union. Steve is a race-track tout, a labor spy, strikebreaker, heel extraordinary. Maggie, the girl, is a factory day-dreamer, sentimental and soft, completely hypnotized by Steve's hypocrisy and flash. In the end Maggie turns to Tom after he has embezzled union funds for Steve. It is entirely to the author's credit that Maggie has been disillusioned in Steve not through any romantic revelation, but through fascism, which is so successfully integrated into the action of the novel that it serves as a dramatic force and climactic agent. Mr. McIntyre makes no comments, draws no conclusions. He presents the possibility of dictatorship in this country, shows it in the process of fermentation, and brings credibility to it through a series of exact and psychologically recognizable portraits. Steve is an inevitable provocateur and rat—morally the color of a prostitute's ticket; Dr. Jenns, money's white hope, is a contemporary kind of alchemist, peddling fascism to the labor-racketeers who want to be there when it happens. Mr. McIntyre's types and themes may be found between the lines of any newspaper; his methods and performance, however, have the qualities peculiar to good writing. CHRISTOPHER LAZARE.

Types of Ambiguity

Poems, by William Empson. London: Chatto and Windus. 6 shillings.

ALLEN TATE once published three essays in The New Republic defending the strictly poetic kind of truth against a scientific kind which he assumed to contradict it. The assumption was valid and the defense real only on a popular and outdated view of science. There can be no quarrel with Tate's solution of his problem in his own terms, but there is good reason not to be bothered by the same problem. William Empson's poems are very much to the point. In them scientific concepts are made concrete by imagination and made poetry by great skill in the craft. If they had no other merit they would be worth reading for this. We need a reminder—more powerful than popularizations give—of the depths and patterns of possibility behind our news photographs.

For all that (or because of that), being difficult, they will be read little and may be derided much. Empson's "Seven Types of Ambiguity," which was actually a richer essay on poetry than any by his master, I. A. Richards, may be recalled only for the bearing its title has on the prevailing character of these poems. The impatient reader can scarcely be blamed. Often a fourth or fifth reading with reference to the notes provided will produce nothing but a cold admiration for the fertility with which nuance is added to nuance in close-packed verse. But often enough what seems the innocence of mere ingenuity will be found to serve as a camouflage for the development of a single carefully suggested image of life, deadly in its clarity when uncovered. ROBERT FITZGERALD.

Books in Brief

Song on Your Bugles, by Eric Knight. New York: Harper and Brothers (Story Press). $2.50.

INDUSTRIAL Yorkshire is grand country for a proletarian novel and Eric Knight doesn't waste one bit of it. His spokesman is a textile worker with artistic genius, striving to gain freedom to paint, yet unwilling to use his art as a means of escaping the industrial struggle. This kind of theme could be horribly sentimentalized and distorted into unconvincing propaganda, but the author must get full marks for having made his proletarian painter ring absolutely true. Throughout the book one finds this kind of conquest repeated: in the descriptions of life in the mill-owner's mansion as contrasted with life in the worker's cottage; in the philosophizing on art in relation to the worker and in the portrayal of simple personalities, the underlying sincerity and excellent writing produce a genuine picture. Only when Mr. Knight falls back on the stock plot of making his worker fall in love with the boss's daughter, only to find he is the boss's illegitimate son, is one conscious of a faked situation. There are two characters here, Tawpun and Joe, who are so truly drawn that their social significance extends far beyond their village. For non-Yorkshiremen, likely to get bogged in strong dialect, there is an amusing glossary, and consequently no excuse for leaving this book unread. R. V.

Pity for Women, by Helen Anderson. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.

The lonely, muddled, impractical women who generally remain anonymous are the subjects of this first novel. Ann Sutley joins them with the prerequisites of a double room in a woman's club, a tedious job and an overly sensitive temperament. After a few unsavory experiences with men she falls in love with an older woman and goes off to live with her. Miss Anderson's story and background would have been more effective had she not become so overwrought in discussing them. Her characters all suffer from cases of hysteria; when they aren't desperate they are weeping, when they aren't weeping they are going mad; and after two hundred pages, the cumulative effect of all these tears is apt to dilute their forcefulness. The whole story, in fact, is so saturated with emotionalism that what should be a tragic ending spills over into bathos. M. B.

Life with Mother, by Clarence Day. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 250 pages. $2.

In these sketches Clarence Day continues his genial saga of the Day family, with Mother as the central character. Save for the distinction that Father's tussles with recalcitrant people and things end in an explosive "Oh damn!" and Mother's in a ladylike, "Why, *Clare!*" they are of the same mold. They both sought to make the universe behave in an orderly manner—and the universe was obtusely uncooperative. Father wanted to fit everything from the Civil

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

War to the earth and its livestock into a well defined pattern, even as he tried to fit the new coachman into the old livery. Mother, though making allowances for her four boys and her husband, asked only that everything from the German language to her unpredictable servants be reasonable. Their defeat before the onslaught of time, sweeping away the vogue of pug dogs, rubber plants and brownstone houses, left them unbowed, with Father shaking his fist at street cars, and Mother attempting to rescue a gigantic but useless mirror from her demolished house. F. B. F.

Fifty Million Brothers: A Panorama of Lodges and Clubs, by Charles W. Ferguson. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 397 pages. $3.

Seven years ago Mr. Ferguson decided it was high time a survey of the crazyquilt of social, fraternal and patriotic organizations in these United States was made. And it is not at all unlikely that he first planned a survey in the ridiculing fashions of seven years ago. The finished book, however, turned out to be something else. Instead of guffaws at the expense of brethren who pant for esoteric rituals, gaudy regalia, secret handclasps, luncheon stunts and business boosting, Mr. Ferguson chose to try to learn and to understand the psychology of the "joiner." In the end, his book adds little that is new or substantial to secret lodges and clubs. It does, however, indicate a popular approach to the subject midway between the too-easy Mencken method and the too-divine school of lodge brothers. Moreover, it gathers in a single volume brief and readable sketches of the historical backgrounds of Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Masons, Elks, Odd Fellows, the Daughters of the Prairie of the Benevolent Herd of Buffaloes of the World, the Society for the Prevention of Calling Sleeping-Car Porters George and a host of others.

F. G.

Royal George, by C. E. Vulliamy. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 318 pages. $4.

The subtitle explains the nature and scope of this work: "A Study of King George III, His Experiment in Monarchy, His Decline and Retirement; with a View of Society, Politics and Historic Events During His Reign." The author is familiar with his subject and has produced an attractively written work based on sound scholarship. The George III here presented is the one commonly known to history and no attempt has been made to vindicate him. Americans who have the idea that the colonists were the prime sufferers from royal tyranny would do well to read it. They will find that English liberties were in even greater jeopardy and England herself on the verge of a popular revolution. If John Wilkes had some of the stuff of Cromwell in his make-up, the whole course of history would have been changed. A. M. D.

Contributors

JONATHAN MITCHELL, who frequently writes on America's domestic as well as foreign policies, at present lives in Washington, D. C.

J. C. FURNAS, best known as the author of the memorable "—And Sudden Death," has written numerous articles for the American magazines. His novel, "Many People Prize It," was just published by Morrow.

CHESTER T. CROWELL, who has done newspaper work throughout the United States, has contributed fiction and articles to a large number of magazines. His home is in Washington, D. C.

ROLFE HUMPHRIES appears in this issue in his two roles of poet and critic. With M. J. Benardete he was co-editor of the anthology of Loyalist ballads, "And Spain Sings."

CHARLES A. BEARD, one of the most distinguished of American historians, has written extensively in the related fields of politics and economics.

MORTON DAUWEN ZABEL is the editor of Poetry: A Magazine of Verse. His collection of modern criticism, "Literary Opinion in America," was just published by Harpers.

JESSE V. MAUZEY is professor of Philosophy at Skidmore College.

B. E. BETTINGER, a member of the staff of The New Republic, has contributed book reviews also to The Nation and The New York Herald Tribune Books.

GRACE ADAMS, author of "Psychology: Science or Superstition," is at present in Virginia at work on a new book.

HAROLD WARD'S special field is the sciences and their social implications.

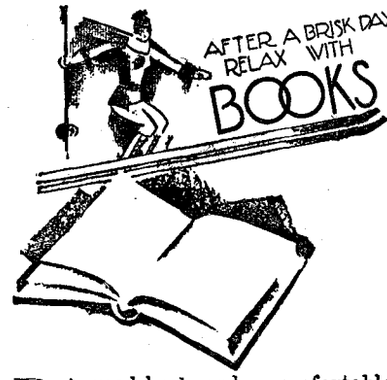
CHRISTOPHER LAZARE has contributed to The New Republic, The Nation and to Kay Boyle's anthology, "365 Days."

ROBERT FITZGERALD is the author of a volume of "Poems," published last year by Arrow Editions.

The initials signed to the brief reviews are those of Richard Vaughan, Miriam Borgenicht, Florence B. Freedman, Frederick Graham and A. Mervyn Davies.

RESORT

GREEN MANSIONS
A Complete Modern Camp for Adults in the Adirondacks
New 22-room Club-house, each room with private bath.
Private golf course, tennis courts handball courts, and all other sport facilities
Special September Rates
$27.50 $32.50
with Free use of Golf Course
LENA BARISH SAM GARLEN
Directors
GREEN MANSIONS
WARRENSBURG N.Y.



A good book and a comfortable chair will bring that "at peace with the world" feeling. Stimulation and entertainment await you in the splendid new novels and biographies. Drop in at your bookstore tonight and see for yourself.
AMERICAN BOOKSELLERS ASS'N
"Remember Them With Books"

RECORDS

MUSIC LOVERS 100,000 of the finest records in the world on sale at 50c & 75c per record (value $1.50 & $2). The Symphonies, Chamber Music, Operas, etc., of Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart, Wagner, etc. Mail Orders. Catalog. The Gramophone, Inc., 18 E. 48th St., N. Y.

SERVICES FOR BOARD

COLLEGE WOMAN stay with child (or tend phone) evenings, for private room, board. Address: Box 34. The New Republic.

CORRESPONDENCE CLUBS

"THE MOST AMAZING enterprise for spreading happiness among congenial people." Over 2,100 members enrolled since 1927. Unusual books loaned. Enclose 3c stamp. CONTACTS, Box 91, Station D, New York City.

HAPPINESS CIRCLE, the best anodyne for the lack of camaraderie. Enclose stamped envelope for details. Dept. W, Box 107 Grand Central Annex, New York.

LANGUAGES

LANGUAGE PHONE SETS. Bought, sold, rented, exchanged. Language Service, 507 5th Avenue, N. Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED